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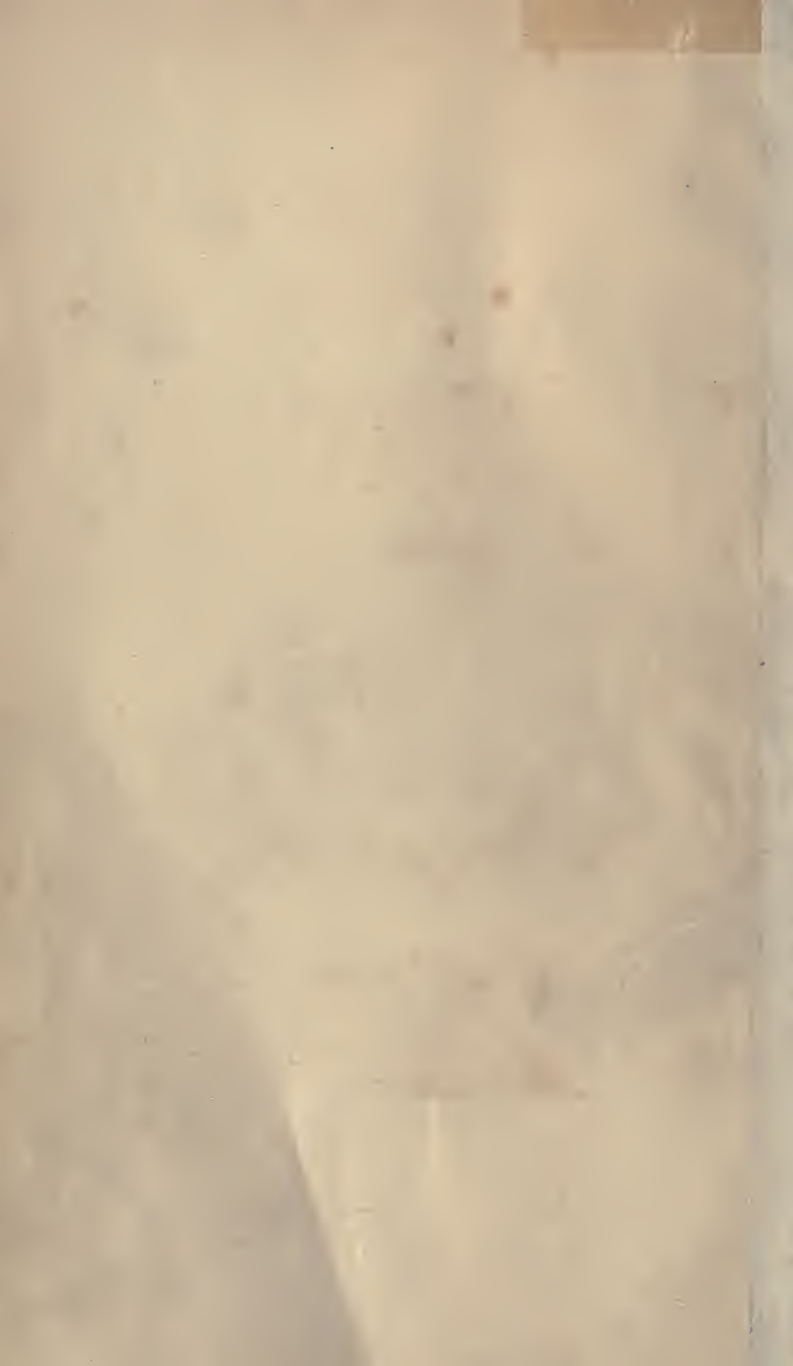
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THE GIPSY;

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“RICHELIEU,” “MARY OF BURGUNDY,”

&c. &c.

“ Ah! what a tangled web we weave,
When first we venture to deceive.”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

GEORGE HAMILTON SEYMOUR, Esq.

A.M. K.C.G.

HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S MINISTER RESIDENT
AT THE COURT OF TUSCANY,
&c. &c. &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

AFTER having found, on so many occasions, that our literary tastes are the same, I must not venture to speak of yours, lest I be led into indirectly praising my own. Permit me, however, to inscribe to your name a work which I could wish better than it is on every account, but for no reason more than because it is dedicated to one whose judgment will not fail to

discover all the faults, though his kindness may lead him to excuse them.

You will receive the book when I am far away, bearing with me the same sense of your courtesy and attention which every one must entertain who has either required your official assistance or enjoyed your private friendship; but if you give "the Gipsy" even a small share of that hospitable reception which you extend to all who have any claim on your kindness, and to many who have none, you will fully satisfy the expectations of,

My dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

G. P. R. JAMES.

THE GIPSY.

CHAPTER I.

AT that time in the world's history when watches, in their decline from the fat comeliness of the turnip to the scanty meagreness of the half-crown, had arrived at the intermediate form of a biffin — when the last remnant of a chivalrous spirit instigated men to wear swords every day, and to take purses on horseback — when quadrupeds were preferred to steam, and sails were necessary to a ship — when Chatham and Blackstone appeared in the senate and at the bar, and Goldsmith, Johnson, and Burke, Cowper, Reynolds, Robertson, Hume, and Smollett, were just beginning to cumber the highways of arts and sciences — at that period of the dark ages, the events which are about to be related undoubtedly took place, in a county which shall be nameless.

It may be that the reader would rather have the situation more precisely defined, in order, as he goes along, to fix each particular incident that this book may hereafter contain to the precise spot and person for which it was intended. Nevertheless, such disclosures must not be; in the first place, because the story, being totally and entirely a domestic one, depends little upon locality; and, in the next place, because greater liberties can be taken with people and things when their identity is left in doubt, than when it is clearly ascertained; for, although —

“ When caps into a crowd are thrown,
What each man fits he calls his own,”

yet no one likes to have his name written upon his fool's cap, and handed down, for the benefit of posterity, attached to such an ornament.

It was, then, on an evening in the early autumn, at that particular period of history which we have described, that two persons on horseback were seen riding through a part of the country, the aspect of which was one whereon we delight to dwell; that is to say, it was a purely English aspect. Now this character is different from all others, yet subject to

a thousand varieties; for although England, in its extent, contains more, and more beautiful, scenes, of different kinds and sorts of the picturesque, than any other country under heaven, nevertheless there is an aspect in them all that proclaims them peculiarly English. It is not a sameness — far, far from it; but it is a harmony; and whether the view be of a mountain or a valley, a plain or a wood, a group of cottages by the side of a clear still trout stream, or a country town cheering the upland, there is still to be seen in each a fresh green Englishness, which — like the peculiar tone of a great composer's mind, pervading all his music, from his requiem to his lightest air — gives character and identity to every object, and mingles our country, and all its sweet associations, with the individual scene.

The spot through which the travellers were riding, and which was a wide piece of forest ground, one might have supposed, from the nature of the scenery, to be as common to all lands as possible; but no such thing! and any one who gazed upon it, required not to ask themselves in what part of the world they were. The road, which, though sandy, was smooth, neat, and well tended, came down the slope of

a long hill, exposing its course to the eye for near a mile. There was a gentle rise on each side, covered with wood; but this rise, and its forest burden, did not advance within a hundred yards of the road on either hand, leaving between — except where it was interrupted by some old sand-pits — a space of open ground covered with short green turf, with here and there an ancient oak standing forward before the other trees, and spreading its branches to the way-side. To the right was a little rivulet gurgling along the deep bed it had worn for itself amongst the short grass, in its way towards a considerable river that flowed through the valley at about two miles' distance; and, on the left, the eye might range far amidst the tall separate trees — now, perhaps, lighting upon a stag at gaze, or a fallow deer tripping away over the dewy ground as light and gracefully as a lady in a ball-room — till sight became lost in the green shade and the dim wilderness of leaves and branches.

Amidst the scattered oaks in advance of the wood, and nestled into the dry nooks of the sand-pits, appeared about half a dozen dirty brown shreds of canvas, none of which seemed larger than a dinner napkin, yet which — spread

over hoops, cross sticks, and other contrivances — served as habitations to six or seven families of that wild and dingy race, whose existence and history is a phenomenon, not amongst the least strange of all the wonderful things that we pass by daily without investigation or enquiry. At the mouths of one or two of these little dwelling-places might be seen some gipsy women, with their peculiar straw bonnets, red cloaks, and silk handkerchiefs; some, withered, shrunk, and witchlike, bore evident the traces of long years of wandering exposure and vicissitude; while others, with the warm rose of health and youth glowing through the golden brown of their skins, and their dark gem-like eyes flashing undimmed by sorrow or infirmity, gave the beau idéal of a beautiful nation long passed away from thrones and dignities, and left but as the fragments of a wreck dashed to atoms by the waves of the past.

At one point, amidst white wood ashes, and many an unlawful feather from the plundered cock and violated turkey, sparkled a fire and boiled a caldron; and, round about the ancient beldame who presided over the pot, were placed, in various easy attitudes, several of the male members of the tribe — mostly covered with

long loose great coats, which bespoke the owners either changed or shrunk. A number of half naked brats, engaged in many a sport, filled up the scene, and promised a sturdy and increasing race of rogues and vagabonds for after years.

Over the whole — wood, and road, and streamlet, and gipsy encampment — was pouring in full stream the purple light of evening, with the long shadows stretching across, and marking the distances all the way up the slope of the hill. Where an undulation of the ground, about half-way up the ascent, gave a wider space of light than ordinary, were seen, as we have before said, two strangers riding slowly down the road, whose appearance soon called the eyes of the gipsy fraternity upon their movements; for the laws in regard to vagabondism* had lately been strained somewhat hard,

* At various times, very severe laws have been enacted in all countries against gipsies. The very fact of being a gipsy, or consorting with them for a certain length of time, was, at one period, punishable by death in England. The greater part of these laws, however, had been repealed before the epoch at which the events recorded in this book occurred; and that wandering race were simply subject to the regulations respecting rogues and vagabonds. The old spirit of the penal statutes, however, was not

especially in that part of the country, and the natural consequence was, that the gipsy and the beggar looked upon almost every human thing as an enemy.

With their usual quick perception, however, they soon gathered that the travellers were not of that cast from whom they had any thing to fear; and, indeed, there was nothing of the swaggering bailiff or bullying constable in the aspect of either. The one was a man of about six and twenty years of age, with fine features, a slight but well made person, and a brown but somewhat pale complexion. His eyes were remarkably fine, and his mouth and chin beautifully cut; he rode his horse, too, with skill and grace; and withal he had that air of consequence, which is at any time worth the riband of the Bath. His companion was older, taller, stronger. In age he might be thirty-two or three, in height he was fully six feet, and seldom was there ever a form which excelled his in all those points

forgotten, and the gipsies were often visited with bitter persecution long after those statutes had ceased to exist. It is not unworthy of remark, that in Scotland they have been, at various times, not only treated with great lenity, but that their leaders have been recognised by law as sovereign princes, exercising capital jurisdiction over their own race.

where great strength is afforded without any appearance of clumsiness. He rode his horse, which was a powerful dark-brown gelding, as if half his life were spent on horseback; and as he came down the hill with the peculiar appearance of ease and power which great bodily strength and activity usually give, one might well have concluded that he was as fine-looking a man as one had ever beheld. But when he approached so as to allow his features to be seen, all one's prepossessions were dispelled, and one perceived that, notwithstanding this fine person, he was, in some respects, as ugly a man as it was possible to conceive.

Thanks to Jenner and vaccination, we, the English, are now-a-days as handsome a people as any, perhaps, in Europe, with smooth skins and features as Nature made them; but in the times I talk of, vaccination, alas! was unknown; and whatever the traveller we speak of might have been before he had been attacked by the small-pox, the traces which that horrible malady had left upon his face, had deprived it of every vestige of beauty — if, indeed, we except his eyes and eyelashes, which had been spared, as if just to redeem his countenance from the frightful. They — his eyes and eyelashes — were

certainly fine, very fine ; but they were like the beauty of Tadmor in the wilderness, for all was ugliness around them. However, his countenance had a good-humoured expression, which made up for much ; neither was it of that vulgar ugliness, which robes and ermine but serve to render more low and unprepossessing. But still, when first you saw him, you could not but feel that he was excessively plain, and yet there was always something at the heart which made one — as the ravages of the disease struck the eye — think, if not say, “ What a pity ! ”

The dress of the two strangers was alike, and it was military ; but although an officer of those days did not feel it at all scandalous or wrong to show himself in his regimentals, yet such was not the case in the present instance, and the habiliments of the two horsemen consisted, as far as could be seen, of a blue riding-coat, bound round the waist by a crimson scarf, with a pair of heavy boots, of that form which afterwards obtained the name of Pendragon. Swords were at their sides, and—as was usual in those days, even for the most pacific travellers—large fur-covered holsters were at their saddle bows ; so that—although they had no servants with them, and were evidently of that class of society

upon which the more liberal-minded prey, and have preyed in all ages—there was about them “something dangerous,” to attack which would have implied great necessity, or a very combative disposition.

As the travellers rode on, the gipsy men, without moving from the places they had before occupied, eyed them from under their bent brows, affecting withal hardly to see them; while the urchins ran like young apes by the side of their horses, performing all sorts of antics, and begging hard for halfpence; and at length a girl of about fifteen or sixteen—notwithstanding some forcible injunctions to forbear on the part of the old woman who was tending the caldron—sprang up the bank, beseeching the gentlemen in the usual singsong of her tribe, to cross her hand with silver, and have their fortunes told; promising them, at the same time, a golden future, and, like Launcelot, “a pretty trifle of wives.”

In regard to her chiromantic science the gentlemen were obdurate, though each of them gave her one of those flat polished pieces of silver, which were sixpences in our young days; and having done this, they rode on, turning, for a moment or two, their conversation—which had

been flowing in a very different channel—to the subject of the gipsies they had just passed, moralising deeply on their strange history and wayward fate, and wondering that no philanthropic government had ever endeavoured to give them “a local habitation and a name” amongst the sons and daughters of honest industry.

“I am afraid that the attempt would be in vain,” answered the younger of the two to his companion. “And besides, it would be doing a notable injustice to the profession of petty larceny, to deprive it of its only avowed and honourable professors, while we have too many of its amateur practitioners in the very best society already.”

“Nay, nay! Society is not as bad as that would argue it,” rejoined the other. “Thank God, there are few thieves or pilferers within the circle of my acquaintance, which is not small.”

Indeed!” said his companion. “Think for a moment, my dear Colonel, how many of your dearly beloved friends are there, who, for but a small gratification, would pilfer from you those things that you value most highly! How many would steal from one the affection of one’s mis-

tress or wife! How many, for some flimsy honour, some dignity of riband or of place, would pocket the reputation of deeds they had never done! How many, for some party interest or political rancour, would deprive you of your rightful renown, strip you of your credit and your fame, and ‘filch from you your good name!’ Good God! those gipsies are princes of honesty compared with the great majority of our dear friends and worldly companions.”

His fellow traveller replied nothing for a moment or two; unless a smile, partly gay, partly bitter, could pass for answer. The next minute, however, he read his own comment upon it, saying, “I thought, De Vaux, you were to forget your misanthropy when you returned to England.”

“Oh, so I have,” replied the other, in a gayer tone; “it was only a single seed of the wormwood sprouting up again. But, as you must have seen throughout our journey, my heart is all expansion at coming back again to my native land, and at the prospect of seeing so many beings that I love: though God knows,” — he added, somewhat gloomily — “God knows whether the love be as fully returned. However, imagination serves me for Prince Ali’s

perspective glass ; and I can see them all, even now, at their wonted occupations, while my vanity dresses up their faces in smiles when they think of my near approach.”

His companion sighed ; and, as he did not at all explain why he did so, we must take the liberty of asking the worthy reader to walk into the tabernacle of his bosom, and examine which of the mind's gods it was that gave forth that oracular sigh, so that the officiating priest may afford the clear interpretation thereof. But, to leave an ill-conceived figure of speech, the simple fact was, that the picture of home, and friends, and smiling welcome, and happy love, which his companion's speech had displayed, had excited somewhat like envy in the breast of Colonel Manners. Envy, indeed, properly so called, it was not ; for the breast of Colonel Manners was swept out and garnished every day by a body of kindly spirits, who left not a stain of envy, hatred, or malice in any corner thereof. The proper word would have been *regret* ; for regret it certainly was that he felt, when he reflected that, though he had many of what the world calls friends, and a milky way of acquaintances — though he was honoured and esteemed wherever he came, and felt a

proud consciousness that he deserved to be so—yet that on all the wide surface of the earth there was no sweet individual spot, where dearer love, and brighter smiles, and outstretched arms, glad voices, and sparkling eyes, waited to welcome the wanderer home from battle, and danger, and privation, and fatigue. He felt that there was a vacancy to him in all things—that the magic chain of life's associations wanted a link; and he sighed—not with *envy*, but with *regret*. That it was so, was partly owing to events over which he had no control. Left an orphan at an early age, the father's mansion and the mother's bosom he had never known; and neither brother nor sister had accompanied his pilgrimage through life. His relations were all distant ones; and though, being the last of a long line, great care had been bestowed upon his infancy and youth, yet all the sweet ties and kindred fellowship, which gather thickly round us in a large family, were wanting to him.

So far his isolated situation depended upon circumstances which he could neither alter nor avoid; but that he had not created for himself a home, and ties as dear as those which fortune had at first denied him, depended on himself; or, rather, on what in vulgar parlance is called a

crotchet, which was quite sufficiently identified with his whole nature, to be considered as part of himself, though it was mingled intimately—woven in and out—with qualities of a very different character.

This crotchet—for that is the only term fitted for it, as it was certainly neither a whim nor a caprice—this crotchet may be considered as a matter of history—of his history I mean; for it depended upon foregone facts, which must be here explained. It is sad to overturn all that imagination may have already done for the reader, on the very first news that Colonel Manners had a foregone history at all. He had not been crossed in love, as may be supposed, nor had he seen the object of his affections swept away by a torrent, burned in a house on fire, killed by an unruly horse, or die by any of those means usually employed for such a purpose. No; he had neither to bewail the coldness nor the loss of her he loved, because, up to the moment when we have set him before the reader, he had unfortunately never been in love at all.

The fact is, that, during his youth, Colonel Manners had possessed one of the finest faces in the world, and every one of his judicious

friends had taken care to impress deeply upon his mind, that it was the best portion of all his present possessions or future expectations. By nature he was quite the reverse of a vain man; but when he saw that the great majority of those by whom he was surrounded admired the beauties of his face far more than the beauties of his mind, and loved him for the symmetry of his external person more than for the qualities of his heart, of course the conviction that, however much esteem and respect might be gained by mental perfections, affection was only given to beauty, became an integral part of that fine texture of memories and ideas, which, though I do not think it, as some have done, the mind itself, I yet look upon as the mind's innermost garment. Such was the case when, at the age of about twenty, he was attacked by the small-pox. For a length of time he was not allowed to see a looking-glass, the physicians mildly telling him that his appearance would improve, that they trusted no great traces would remain: but when he did see a looking-glass, he certainly saw the reflection of somebody he had never seen before. In the mean while, his relations had too much regard for their own persons to come near him;

and when, after having purified in the country, he went to visit an antique female cousin, who had been a card-playing belle in the reign of his Majesty of blessed memory, King George the First, the old lady first made him a profound courtesy, taking him for a stranger; and when she discovered who he was, burst forth with — “ Good God, Charles, you are perfectly frightful ! ”

To the same conclusion Charles Manners had by this time come himself; and the very modesty of his original nature now leagued with one of the deceptions of vanity, and made him believe that he could never, by any circumstances or events, obtain love. Nevertheless he made up his mind to his fate entirely, and determined neither to seek for, nor to think of, a good that could not be his. Indeed, at first, according to the usual extravagance of man's nature, he flew to the very far extreme, and believed that — putting woman's love out of the question — even the more intimate friendship and affection of his fellow men might be influenced by his changed appearance, and that he would be always more or less an object of that pity which touches upon scorn. These ideas his commerce with the world soon showed

him to be fallacious ; but in the mean time they had a certain effect upon his conduct. Possessing a consciousness of great powers of mind and fine qualities of the heart, he determined to cultivate and employ them to the utmost, and compel esteem and respect, if love and affection were not to be obtained. In his course through the army, too, the sort of animosity which he felt against his own ugliness, — which had cut him off from happiness, of a sort that he was well calculated to enjoy, — together with that mental and corporeal complexion which did not suffer him to know what fear is, led him to be somewhat careless of his own person ; and during his earlier years of service he acquired the name of rash Charles Manners. But it was soon found that, wherever the conduct of any enterprise was intrusted to his judgment, its success was almost certain ; and that skill and intrepidity with him went hand in hand.

Gradually he found that, with men at least, and with soldiers especially, personal beauty formed no necessary ingredient in friendship ; and with a warm heart and noble feelings — guarded, however, by wisdom and discretion — he soon rendered himself universally liked and

esteemed in the different corps with which he served, and had an opportunity of selecting one or two of his fellow officers for more intimate regard. Unfortunately, however, he saw no reason to change his opinion in respect to woman's love. Indeed, he sought not to change it; for, as we have already said, the belief that female affection could only be won by personal beauty, was one of those intimate convictions which were interwoven with all the fabric of his ideas. He ceased to think of it; he devoted himself entirely to his profession — he won honour and the highest renown — he found himself liked and esteemed by his military companions, courted and admired in general society; and he was content. At least, if he was not content, the regrets which would not wholly be smothered — the yearnings for nearer ties and dearer affections which are principles, not thoughts — only found vent occasionally in such a sigh as that which we have just described.

His companion, though he remarked it, made no comment on his sigh; for notwithstanding the most intimate relationships of friendship which existed between himself and his fellow traveller, and which had arisen in mutual services that may hereafter be more fully men-

tioned, he felt that the length of their acquaintance had not been such as to warrant his enquiring more curiously into those private intricacies of the bosom, from which such signs of feeling issued forth. He saw, however, that the proximate cause of the slight shadow that came over his friend, lay in something that he himself had said in picturing the happy dreams that chequered his misanthropy; and, putting his horse into a quicker pace as they got upon the level ground, he changed the subject while they rode on.

The time, as we have said, was evening, and as the strangers passed by the gipsy encampment, a flood of purple light, pouring from as splendid a heaven as ever held out the promise of bright after days, was streaming over the road; but as the travellers reached the flat and turned the angle of the wood where the road wound round the bases of the hills, the sky was already waxing grey, and a small twinkling spot of gold, here and there, told that darkness was coming fast. At the distance of about half a mile farther, the river was first seen flowing broad and silvery through the valley; and a quarter of an hour more brought the travellers to a spot where the water, taking an abrupt turn round a

salient promontory thrown out from the main body of the hills, left hardly room for the road between the margin and the wood. On the other side of the river, which might be a hundred yards broad, was a narrow green meadow, backed by some young fir plantings; and just beyond the first turn of the bank, a deep sombre dell led away to the right; while the shadows of the trees over the water, the darkening hue of the sky, and the wild uninhabited aspect of the whole scene, gave a sensation of gloom, which was not diminished by a large raven flapping heavily up from the edge of the water, and hovering with a hoarse croak over some carrion it had found amongst the reeds.

“ This is a murderous-looking spot enough !” said Colonel Manners, turning slightly towards De Vaux, who had been silent for some minutes : “ this is a murderous-looking spot enough !”

“ Well may it be so !” answered his companion abruptly : “ well may it be so ; for on this very spot my uncle was murdered twenty years ago.”

“ Indeed !” exclaimed his fellow traveller : “ indeed — but on reflection,” he added, “ I

remember having heard something of it, though I was then a boy, and have forgotten all the circumstances."

He spoke as if he would willingly have heard them again detailed; but, for a moment or two, De Vaux made no reply; and the next instant, the sound of a horse's feet at a quick trot suddenly broke upon the ear, and called the attention of both. In a minute more, a horseman wrapped in a large roquelaure passed them rapidly; and though he neither spoke nor bowed, his sudden appearance was enough to break off the thread of their discourse. When he was gone, Colonel Manners felt that, though De Vaux might take it up again if he would, he himself could not in propriety do so. De Vaux, however, was silent; for he was not one of those men to whom the accidents and misfortunes of their friends and relations furnish matter for pleasant discourse; and the topic of course dropped there. Perhaps, indeed, the younger traveller showed some inclination even to avoid the subject, for he led the conversation almost immediately into another channel, pointing out to his friend the various hills and landmarks which distinguished the grounds of his father from those of his aunt,

and dwelling with enthusiasm upon the pleasures that his boyhood had there known, and the hopes which his return had re-awakened in his bosom: and yet there was mingled with the whole a touch of fastidiousness which contrasted strangely enough with the warmth of feeling and expression to which he gave way in other respects. He seemed to doubt the very love the happiness of which he pictured so brightly; he seemed to distrust the joys to which he was so sensitively alive; he even seemed, in some degree, to sneer at himself for giving the credence that he did to those things which he most desired to believe true.

But Edward de Vaux had been brought up in a fastidious school. He had lived at the acmé of fortune and trod upon circumstances all his life, and this we hold to be the true way of becoming misanthropical. It is nonsense to suppose that a man turns misanthrope in consequence of great misfortunes. No such thing! it is by being fortunate *ter et amplius*. The spoilt children of the blind goddess are those that kick at her wheel; and those on whom she showers nothing but misfortunes, cling tight to the tire, in hopes of a better

turn, till the next whirl casts them off into the wide hereafter.

Edward de Vaux stood at the climax of fortune. Never in his life had he known what a serious reverse or great misfortune is; and consequently he had gathered together all the petty vexations and minor disappointments that he had met with, and, to use the term of Napoleon Buonaparte, had nearly stung himself to death with wasps. Perhaps, too, he might be fastidious by inheritance, for his father was so in a still higher degree than himself; though in the father it showed itself in irritable impatience, and a sort of contempt both tyrannical and insulting towards those whom he disliked; while in the son, mingled with, if not springing from, finer feelings: passing, too, through the purifying medium of a gentler heart, and corrected by a high sense of what is gentlemanly, his fastidiousness seldom showed itself except in a passing sneer at any thing that is false, affected, or absurd, in an indignant sarcasm at that which is base or evil, or in petulant irritability at that which is weak.

As he now rode onwards to rejoin those friends whom he had not seen for nearly three years, accompanied by a companion who had

never seen them at all, the little world of his heart was in a strange commotion. All the joy which an affectionate disposition can feel was rising up at every point against the sway of cold propriety, and yet he tormented himself with a thousand imaginary annoyances. Now he fancied that the delight he felt and expressed was undignified, and might lower him in the eyes of his companion; now he chose to doubt that his reception from those he had left behind would be warm enough to justify the exuberant pleasure that he himself experienced; while, keenly alive to the slightest ridicule, he shrunk from the idea of exposing, even to his dearest friend, one single spot in his heart to which the lash could be applied.

“ I was foolish,” he thought, “ not to leave Manners in London for a day, and get all the joyful absurdities of a first welcome over before he came down. However, my aunt would have it so; and it cannot be avoided now.”

As they proceeded, the purple of the evening died entirely away, and a grey dimness fell over tree, and stream, and hill. Star by star looked out, grew brighter and brighter, as the wandering ball on which we travel through the

inconceivable depth turned our hemisphere from the superior light, and at length all was night.

In the lapse of ten minutes more, the road — which, winding about between the hills and the stream, was forced often out of its true direction — had conducted them to a steep bank overhanging a wider part of the valley, and here Colonel Manners divined — for he could scarcely be said to see — that a scattered but considerable village lay before them. Up and down the sides of the hill, a hundred twinkling lights in cottage windows were sprinkled like glow-worms amongst the darker masses of orchard and copsewood; and now and then, as the travellers advanced, a bright glare suddenly flashed forth from some opening door; and then again was as speedily extinguished, when the entrance or the exit of the visiter was accomplished. Some watchful dog, too, caught the sound of horses' feet, and, after one or two desultory barks, set up his tongue into a continual peal. His neighbours of the canine race took the signal, and — not at all unlike the human species — ever inclined to clamour, yelped forth in concert, whether they had heard or not the noise that roused their

comrade's indignation, so that the village was soon one continued roar with the efforts of various hairy throats.

The salutation, however, was sweet to Edward de Vaux, for it spoke of home — or at least of a dwelling that was dearer than any other home he might possess; and, pausing a moment, he pointed onward to a spot where, on the edge of the hill beyond the village, might be seen, cutting sharp upon the pale silvery grey of the western sky, the dark outline of a large house, with a plentiful supply of chimneys, of an architecture somewhat less light and fanciful than that of Palladio, but very well suited to a dwelling in the land of peace and comfort.

“That is my aunt's house,” said De Vaux, “and, though it is nearly three miles by the road from the spot where that horseman passed us, it is not much more than three quarters of a mile by the path over the hill. But that path,” he added, “is impracticable for horses, or I should certainly have risked breaking your neck, Manners, rather than take this long tedious round.”

Now, strange to say, the round that they had taken seemed longer and more tedious to Ed-

ward de Vaux, when he came within sight of the mansion which was to end his journey, than it had done at any other moment of the ride. But so it was; and without inquiring into things with which we have nothing to do, we may conclude that he felt some of those vague, unreasonable doubts and apprehensions, which almost every one experiences on the first view of one's home after a long absence — those fears which are the very children of our hopes — that anxiety which the uncertainty of human fate impresses upon our minds, till we are *sure* that all is well. Who is there that has not gazed up at his own dwelling place as he returned from far, and asked himself, with a sudden consciousness of the instability of all things, “ Shall I find nothing gone amiss? Has no misfortune trod that threshold? Has disease or sorrow never visited it? Has death turned his steps aside?”

Whatever it was that Edward de Vaux felt, although the round seemed a long one, and the time tedious that it had consumed, he yet drew in his rein, not so as to bring his horse quite up, but to check him into a walk; while he pointed out the house to his companion, and gazed at its dark and distant mass himself. At

that very moment, a single ray glimmered in one of the windows, passed on into another, and then three windows suddenly streamed forth with light. It looked like a welcome; it looked like a beacon to say that all was well; and though no man in the present day cares a straw for things that in other years, when skilfully applied, have won battles and overthrown dynasties — I mean omens — yet every man has a silent, unacknowledged, foolish little system of augury of his own; and Edward de Vaux and his companion, at the sight of this dexter omen, set spurs to their horses, and rode merrily on their way.

CHAPTER II.

THE reader, who loves variety, will not be displeased, perhaps, to find that this story, leaving the two horsemen whom we have conducted a short stage on their way, now turns to another of our characters not less important to our tale.

In the same wood, which we have already described as clothing the hills and skirting the road over which De Vaux and his companion were travelling, but in a far more intricate part thereof than that into which the reader's eye has hitherto penetrated, might be seen, at the hour which we have chosen for the commencement of our tale, the figure of a man creeping quietly, but quickly, along a path so covered by the long branches of the underwood, that it could only be followed out by one who knew well the deepest recesses of the forest.

This personage was spare in form, and without being tall as compared with other men, he was

certainly tall in reference to his other proportions. His arms were long and sinewy, his feet small, his ankles well turned, and his whole body giving the promise of great activity, though at a time of life when the agile pliancy of youth is generally past and gone. He was dressed in an old brown long coat, "a world too wide" for his spare form, so that, as he crept along with a quiet, serpentine turning of his body, he looked like an eel in a great coat, if the reader's imagination be vivid enough to call up such an image. A hat, which had seen other days, and many of them, covered his brows; but under that hat was a countenance which, however ordinary might be the rest of his appearance, redeemed the whole from the common herd. The complexion spoke his race: it was of a pale, greenish tint, without any rosier hue in the cheeks to enliven the pure gipsy colour of his skin. His nose was small, and slightly aquiline, though of a peculiar bend, forming, from the forehead to the tip, what Hogarth drew for the line of beauty. The eyebrows were small, and pencilled like a Circassian's, and the eyes themselves, shining through their long, thick, black eyelashes, were full of deep

light, and — to use a very anomalous crowd of words—of wild, dark, melancholy fire. His forehead was broad and high; and the long, soft, glossy, black hair, that fell in untrimmed profusion round his face, had hardly suffered from the blanching hand of time, although his age could not be less than fifty-five or fifty-six, and might be more. His teeth, too, were unimpaired, and of as dazzling a whiteness as if beetle and recca had all possessed the properties their venders assert, and had all been tried on them in turn.

Such was his appearance, as, creeping along through the brushwood with a stealthy motion, which would hardly have disturbed the deer from their lair, he made his way towards the spot where we have seen that his fellows were encamped. He was still far distant from it, however; and although it was evident that he was, or had been, well acquainted with the intricacies of the wood, yet it appeared that some leading marks were necessary to guide him surely on his way; for ever and anon, when he could find a round knob of earth raising itself above the rest of the ground, he would climb it, and gaze for several moments

over the world of wood below him, rich in all the splendid hues of autumn, and flooded by the purple light of the evening.

Ever, as he thus looked out, there might be seen a column of bluish white smoke rising from a spot at a mile's distance ; and, — after towering up solemnly in the still air for several hundred feet — spreading into light rolling clouds, and drifting amongst the wood. Thitherward, again, he always turned his course ; and any one who has remarked the fondness of gipsies for a fire, even when they have no apparent necessity for it, will little doubt that the smoke, or the flame, serves them, on many occasions, for a signal or a guide.

As progression through thick bushes can never be very rapid, the evening had faded nearly into twilight ere the gipsy reached the encampment of his companions. The hearing of those whose safety often depends upon the sharpness of their ears, is, of course, sufficiently acuminated by habit ; and although his steps were, as we have shown, stealthy enough, his approach did not escape the attention of the party round the fire. We have seen that they had taken but little ap-

parent notice of the two travellers, who had passed them about a quarter of an hour before ; but the sound of quiet footsteps from the side of the wood, the moving of the branches, and the slight rustle of the autumn leaves, caused a far greater sensation. Two or three of the stoutest started instantly on their feet, and watched the spot whence those sounds proceeded, as if not quite sure what species of visiter the trees might conceal. The moment after, however, the figure we have described, emerging into the more open part of the wood, seemed to satisfy his comrades that there was no cause for apprehension ; and those who had risen, turned towards the others, saying, “ It is Pharold,” in a tone which, without expressing much pleasure, at all events announced no alarm.

Several of the young gipsies sprang up, shaking their many-coloured rags — for, like the goddess of the painted bow, their clothing was somewhat motley — and ran on to meet the new comer ; while the elder members of the respectable assemblage congregated under the oaks, though they did not show the same alacrity, perhaps, as the younger and more

volatile of the party, received him with an air in which reverence was mingled with a slight touch of sullenness.

“ Who has past since I left you, William ? ” was the first question of the gipsy on his return, addressing one of the young men who had been lying nearer than the others to the high road, and by whose side appeared, as he rose, a most portentous cudgel.

“ A woman with eggs from the market ; three labourers from the fields ; a gamekeeper, who damned us all, and said, if he had his will, he would rid the country of us ; and two gentlemen on horseback, who gave Leena a shilling ; ” was the accurate reply of the young gipsy, whose face, we must remark, assumed not the most amiable expression that ever face put on, as he recorded the comments of the gamekeeper upon his race and profession. The other, who has been called Pharold, at first, paid no attention to any part of the account, except the apparition of the two gentlemen on horseback ; but in regard to them, he asked many a question — were they old or young — what was their appearance — their size — their apparent profession ?

To all these inquiries he received such cor-

rect and minute replies, as showed that the seeming indifference with which the gipsy had regarded the two travellers was any thing but real; and that every particular of their dress and circumstances, which eye could reach or inference arrive at, had been carefully marked, and, as it were, written down on memory.

The language which the gipsies spoke amongst themselves was a barbarous compound of some foreign tongue, the origin and structure of which has, and most likely ever will, baffle inquiry, and of English, mingled with many a choice phrase from the very expressive jargon called slang. Thus when the gipsy spoke of the gentlemen he called them *raye*, when he spoke of the peasant he termed him *gazo*; but as the gipsy tongue may, probably, not be very edifying to the reader, the conversation of our characters shall continue to be carried on in a language which is more generally intelligible.

The account rendered by the young man, however, did not seem satisfactory to the elder, who twice asked if that were all; and then made some more particular inquiries concerning the gamekeeper, who had expressed such friendly sentiments towards his tribe.

“Keep a good watch, my boys,” he said, after musing for a moment or two on the answers he received. “Keep a good watch. There is danger stirring abroad; and I fear that we shall be obliged to lift our tents, and quit this pleasant nook.”

“The sooner we quit it the better, I say,” cried the beldame, who had been tending the pot. “What the devil we do here at all, I don’t know. Why, we are well nigh four miles from a farm-yard, and five from the village; and how you expect us to get food I don’t understand.”

“Are there not plenty of rabbits and hares in the wood?” said the other, in reply; “I saw, at least, a hundred run as I crossed just now?”

“But one cannot eat brown meat for ever,” rejoined the dame; and tiny Dick was obliged to go five miles for the turkey in the pot; and then had very near been caught in nimming it off the edge of the common.”

“Well, give me the brown meat for my share,” answered Pharold; “I will eat none of the white things that they have fattened, and fed up with their hoarded corn, and have watched early and late, like a sick child. Give me the free beast that runs wild, and by na-

ture's law belongs to no one but him who catches it."

"No, no, Pharold, you must have your share of turkey too," cried the old lady; for although it may appear strange, yet as there is honour amongst thieves, so there may be sometimes that sort of generosity amongst gipsies, which led the good dame, who, on the present occasion, presided over the pot — though, to judge by her size and proportions, and to gauge her appetite by the Lavater standard of her mouth, she could have eaten the whole turkey of which she spoke, herself — which led her, I say, to press Pharold to his food with hospitable care, declaring that he was a "king of a fellow, though somewhat whimsical."

The gipsies now drew round their fire, and scouts being thrown out on either side to guard against interruption, the pot was unswung from the cross bars that sustained it, trenchers and knives were produced, and with nature's green robe for their table-cloth, a plentiful supper of manifold good things was spread before the race of wanderers. Nor was the meal unjoyous, nor were their figures — at all times picturesque — without an appearance of loftier beauty and more symmetrical grace, as, reclin-

ing on triclinia of nature's providing, with the fire and the evening twilight casting strange lights upon them, they fell into those free and easy attitudes which none but the children of wild activity can assume. The women of the party had all come forth from their huts, and amongst them were two or three lovely creatures as any race ever produced, from the chosen Hebrew to the beauty-dreaming Greek. In truth, there seemed more women than men of the tribe, and there were certainly more children than either; but due subordination was not wanting; and the urchins who were ranged behind the backs of the rest, though they wanted not sufficient food, intruded not upon the circle of their elders.

Scarcely, however, had the first mouthfuls been swallowed, and the cup passed its round, when the farthest scout — a boy of about twelve years of age — ran in, and whispered the mystical words, "A horse's feet!"

"One — or more than one?" was the instant question of Pharold, while his companions busied themselves in shovelling away the principal portions of their supper, and leaving nothing but what might pass for very frugal fare indeed. "Only one!" replied the boy, running back

to his post; and the next instant another report was made to the effect, that a single horseman was coming up the road at full speed, together with such personal marks and appearances as the dim obscurity of the hour permitted the scouts to observe. All this, be it remarked, was carried on with both speed and quietude. The motions of the scouts were all as stealthy as those of a cat over a dewy green, and their words were all whispered; but their steps were quick, and their words were few and rapid.

The motions of the horseman, however, were not less speedy; and ere much counsel could be taken, he was upon the road, exactly abreast of the spot where the gipsies' fire was lighted. There he drew in his reins at once; and, springing to the ground, called aloud to one of the boys, who was acting sentinel, bidding him hold his horse.

“It is he!” said Pharold, “it is he!” and, rising from the turf, he turned to meet the stranger, who on his part approached directly to the fire, and at once held out his hand to the gipsy. Pharold took it, and wrung it hard, and then stood gazing upon the countenance of the stranger, as the fitful firelight flashed

upon it, while his visiter fixed his eyes with equal intensity upon the dark features of the gipsy; and each might be supposed to contemplate the effect of time's blighting touch upon the face of the other, and apply the chilling tidings such an examination always yields to his own heart.

It is probable, indeed, that such was really the case; for the first words of the gipsy were, "Ay, we are both changed indeed!"

"We are so, truly, Pharold," replied the stranger; "so many years cannot pass without change. But did my last letter reach you?"

"It did," replied the gipsy, "and I have done all that you required."

"Did you obtain a sight of him?" demanded the other, eagerly.

"I did," answered the gipsy, "in the park, as he walked alone—I leaped the wall, and——"

Hitherto, all those first hurried feelings which crowd upon us when, after a long lapse of years, we meet again with some one whom circumstances have connected closely with us in the past, had prevented the gipsy and his companion from remarking—or rather from remembering—the presence of so many witnesses. In the midst of what he was saying, however, the

eye of Pharold glanced for a moment from the face of his companion to the circle by the fire, and he suddenly stopped. The other understood his motive at once, and replied, " True, true ; let us come away for a moment, for I must hear it all."

" Of course," answered Pharold, " though you will hear much, perhaps, that you would rather not hear. But come, let us go into the road ; we shall be farther there from human ears than any where else."

As they walked towards the highway both were silent ; for there is not such a dumb thing on the face of the earth as deep emotion ; and for some reason, which may or may not be explained hereafter, both the stranger and the gipsy were more moved by their meeting in that spot than many less firm spirits have been on occasions of more apparent importance.

After thus walking on without a word for two or three hundred yards, the gipsy abruptly resumed his speech. " Well, well," he said, " when we are young we think of the future, and when we are old we think of the past ; and, by my fathers, there is no use of thinking of either ! We cannot change what is coming, nor mend what is gone ; but, as I was saying, I

have seen him: I found that he walked every day in the park by himself, and I watched his hour from behind the wall, and saw him come up the long avenue that leads to the west gate—you remember it?”

“Well, well,” answered the other; “but how did he look?—Tell me, Pharold, how did he look?”

“Dark enough, and gloomy,” answered the gipsy: “he came with his hands behind his back, and his hat over his brows, and his eyes bent upon the ground; and ever as he walked onward his white teeth—for he has fine teeth still—gnawed his under lip; and, for my part, if my solitary walk were every day to be like that, I would not walk at all; but would rather lie me down by the roadside and die at once. Well, then, often too as he came, he would stop and fix his eyes upon one particular pebble in the gravel, and stare at it, as if it had been enchanted; and then, with a great start, would look behind him to see if there was any one watching his gloomy ways; or would suddenly whistle, as if for his dogs, though he had no dog with him.”

His companion drew a deep sigh, and then asked, “But how seemed he in health, Pharold? Is he much changed? He was once as strong a

man as any one could see — does he still seem vigorous and well?”

“ You would not know him,” replied the gipsy, and was going on, but the other broke in vehemently.

“ Not know him? That I would!” he exclaimed, “ though age might have whitened his hair, and dimmed his eye — though suffering might have shrivelled his flesh, and bowed his stature — though death itself, and corruption in its train, might have wrought for days upon him, I would know him, so long as the dust held together. — What, Pharold, not know him? — *I not know him?* ”

“ Well, well,” answered the gipsy, “ I meant that he was changed — far, far more changed than you are — you were a young man when last we met, at least in your prime of strength, and now you are an old one, that is all. But he — he does not seem aged, but blighted. It is not like a flower that has blown, and bloomed, and withered, but one that with a worm in its heart has shrunk, and shrivelled, and faded. He is yellower than I am, though I gain my colour from a long race who brought it centuries ago from a land of sunshine, and he has got it in less than twenty years from the scorching of a

heart on fire. He is bent, too ; and his features are as thin as a heron's bill."

"Sad—sad—sad," said his companion; "but how could it be otherwise?—Well, what more?—Tell me what happened when you met him? Did he know you?"

"At once," answered the gipsy; "no, no; I have seen one of my tribe with a hot iron and an oaken board make paintings of men's faces that no water would wash out; and none should know better than you, that my face has been burnt in upon his heart in such a way that it would take a river of tears to sweep away the marks of it. But let me tell my tale. When I saw that he was near, I sprang over the wall into the walk, and stood before him at once. When first he saw me he started back, as if it had been a snake that crossed him: but the moment after, I could see him recollect himself; and I knew that he was calculating whether to own he knew me, or to affect forgetfulness. He chose the first, and asked mildly enough what I did there. 'I thought you were out of the kingdom,' he said, 'and had promised Sir William Ryder never to return.' I replied that he said true, and that I had not returned till Sir William Ryder had told me to do so."

“What said he then?” asked the other, eagerly; “what said he to that?”

“He started,” replied the gipsy, “and then muttered something about a villain and betraying him; but the moment after, as you must have seen him do long ago, he gathered himself up, and looking as proud and stern as if the lives of a whole world were at his disposal, he asked, what was Sir William Ryder’s motive in bidding me return. ‘Some motive, of course, he has,’ he added, looking at me bitterly. ‘Does he intend to play villain, or fool, or both,—for whatever folly his knavery may tempt him to commit, he will only injure himself; for at this time of day it is somewhat too late to try to injure *me* ;’ and as he spoke,” continued the gipsy, “he nodded his head gravely but meaningly, as if he would have said, ‘You know that I speak truth.’”

The lip of the stranger curled as his companion related this part of a conversation in which he seemed to take no slight interest; but as we do not choose to know any thing of what was passing in his bosom, we must leave that somewhat bitter smile to interpret itself.

“I told him,” continued the gipsy, “as you directed me, that his friend stood in some need

of five thousand pounds, and trusting to his Lordship's kindness and generosity, had directed me to come back and apply to him for that sum. So when he heard that, his face grew very dark; and, after thinking for a minute or two, he looked up two of the walks, for we stood in the crossing, to see if he could see any of the park-keepers, to give me into their hands—I know that was what he wanted. However, there was no one there; and he answered, looking at me as if he would have withered me into dust, 'Tell Sir William Ryder, wherever he is, that he shall wring no more from me. I have sent him his thousand a year regularly, and if any of the packets missed him, he should have let me know; but I will be no sponge to be squeezed for any man's pleasure; nor do I care,' he went on, 'who conspires to bring any false accusation against me. I am prepared to meet every charge boldly, and to prove my innocence before the whole world, if any one dare accuse me.' He spoke very firmly," added the gipsy; "and as long as he continued speaking I kept my eyes upon the ground, though I felt that his were bent upon me: but the moment he had done, I raised mine and looked full upon his face, and his lip quivered and his eye fell in a moment."

“ Did he hold his resolution of refusing ?” demanded the other, over whose countenance, as he listened, had been passing emotions as various as those which the gipsy had depicted : “ did he hold his resolution to the end ?”

“ Firmly !” replied Pharold, “ though he softened his tone a great deal towards me. He said he was only angry with Sir William Ryder, not with me, and asked where I had been during so many years ; and when I told him, in Ireland, he replied, that it was a poor country : I could not have made much money there ; and then he talked of other days, when the old lord took me to the hall because I was a handsome boy, and kept me for two years and more, and would have had me educated ; and he vowed I did mighty wrong to run away and join my own people again, and he took out his purse and gave me all that it contained, and was sorry that it was no more ; but if I would tell him, he said, where we were lying, he would send me more, for old acquaintance sake ; and all the while he talked to me he looked up the walks to see if he could see the park-keepers, to have me taken up, and to accuse me of robbing him, or of some such thing. I could see it all in his eye ; and so I told him that we were lying five

miles to the east; and took leave of him civilly, and came away, laughing that he should think I was fool enough to fancy he and I could ever do any thing but hate each other, to our dying day."

His companion mused for several minutes; and even when he did speak, he took no notice either of the gipsy's suspicions or of the news he gave him, but rather, — as one sometimes does when one wishes any thing just heard to mature itself in the mind, ere farther comment be made upon it, — he linked on what he next said, to that part of Pharold's speech which might have seemed the least interesting, namely, the gipsy's own history; and yet, although he certainly did this, in order to avoid, for the time, the more important parts of his narrative, he did not do it with the commonplace tone of one who speaks of feelings with which he has no sympathy: on the contrary, he spoke with warmth, and kindness, and enthusiasm; and expressed profound regret that the gipsy had, in his boyhood, thrown away advantages so seldom held out to one of his tribe.

"Why? why?" cried the gipsy, "why should you grieve? I did but what you have done yourself. I quitted a life of sloth, ef-

feminacy, and bondage, for one of ease, freedom, and activity. I left false forms, unnatural restraints, enfeebling habits — ay! and sickness, too, for the customs of my fathers, for man's native mode of life, for a continual existence in the bosom of beautiful nature, and for blessed health. We know no sickness but that which carries us to our grave; we feel no vapours; we know no nerves. Go, ask the multitude of doctors, — a curse which man's own luxurious habits have brought upon him, — go, ask your doctors, whether a gipsy be not to be envied, for his exemption from the plagues that punish other men's effeminate habits."

" True, Pharold! true!" replied his companion; " but still, even the short time that you lived in other scenes, must have given your mind a taste for very different enjoyments from those that you can now find. You must have seen the beauty of law and order; you must have learned to delight in mental pleasures; you must long for the society of those of equal intellect and knowledge with yourself."

" And do I not find them?" cried the gipsy, warming in defence of his race; " to be sure, I do. Think not that we have none among us as learned and as thoughtful as yourselves, though

in another way. But you cannot understand us. You think that it is in our habits alone that we are different; but, remember, that when you speak to a true gipsy, who follows exactly the path of his fathers, you speak to one different in race, and creed, and mind, and feeling, and law, and philosophy, from you and yours. You think us all ignorant, and either bound as drudges to some low rejected trade, or plundering others, because we do not comprehend the excellence of laws. But, let me tell you again, that there are men amongst us deeply read in sciences which you know not; speaking well a language, for a hundred words of which your schools have laboured long years in vain. Have we not laws, too, of our own,— laws better observed than your boasted codes? But you choose to doubt that we have them, because we put you beyond our code, as you put us beyond yours. When was ever justice shown to a gipsy? and, therefore, we look upon you as things to pillage. You speak, too, of the pleasures of the mind. Do you think my mind finds no exercise in scenes like these? I walk, hand in hand, with the seasons, through the world. Winter, your enemy, is my friend and companion. Gladly do I see him come, with

his white mantle, through the bare woods and over the brown hills. I watch the budding forth of spring, too, and her light airs and changing skies, as I would the sports of a beloved child. I hail the majestic summer, as if the God of my own land had come to visit our race, even here; and in the yellow autumn, too, with the rich fruit and the fading leaf, I have a comrade full of calmer thoughts. The sunrise, and the sunset, and the midday, to me, are all eloquence. The storm, the stream, the clouds, the wind, for me have each a voice. I talk with the bright stars as they wander through the deep sky, and I listen to the sun and moon, as they sing along their lonely pilgrimage. Is not this enough? What need I more than nature?"

Perhaps his companion, whose mind was in no degree wanting in acuteness, might imagine that, in all the very enjoyments which the gipsy enumerated, as well as in the tone he used, were to be traced some remains of a better education than that of his race in general; and might believe, that, had that education been continued, every pleasure that he felt would have been doubled by refinement. But all this came upon his mind as impression rather than as thought;

— and the reader will please to observe, that there is an immense difference between the two. The truth was, that, ever since the conversation had turned to the gipsy himself, his companion had been doing what is oftener done than the world imagines; that is to say, talking without thinking, and listening without attending. In short, he was thinking of other things; and yet, as we have said, he spoke with kindness, and zeal, and real feeling; but the fact is, that the language he was talking was memory. Years before he had come to the same conclusions, and held the same arguments in his own mind, regarding the very person in whose company he was now once more; so that — having, in all the news he had heard, greater calls upon present thought than he could well satisfy, — as soon as the gipsy began to speak of gipsy life, he turned that topic over to memory, well knowing that she had a plentiful stock of ideas prepared to supply any demand upon such a subject; while intellect went on, quietly thinking of himself and of the present. This plan, when skilfully executed, has a collateral advantage, which, by the way, is often turned into a principal one; namely, that while you let memory go on with the conversation — unless she trips,

or something of that kind — your companion does not perceive that you are thinking at all; and thus the stranger, apparently, listened to, and took part in the gipsy's conversation about himself, while his inner soul was busy, most busy, with the other tidings which he had received. By the time that the enumeration of wild pleasures, afforded by a wandering life, was over, he had settled his plans in his own mind; and, breaking off the subject there, demanded abruptly, —

“ When, Pharold — tell me, when did you see him ? ”

He mentioned no name; and the gipsy, at once dropping the high and enthusiastic tone in which he had been speaking, answered, as to a common question, “ It was but to-day — not four hours ago, or you had not found me here. ”

“ And why not ? ” demanded the other. “ Whither would you go ? ”

“ Far away, ” answered the gipsy, “ far away ! I love not his neighbourhood; nor is it safe for me and mine. He thinks evil against us, and he will not be long ere he tries to bring his thoughts to pass. ”

“ But he cannot injure you, ” replied the other; “ in all the things wherein you and he

have borne a part, he has more cause to fear you than you have to fear him."

"True! true!" said the gipsy, "and yet I love not his neighbourhood. I may have done things in this land, in my youth, when passion and revenge were strong, and wisdom and forbearance weak, that I should little like to have investigated in my middle age. Not that I fear for myself; for, from the dark leap that all men must take, I have never shrunk through life. But I fear the sorrow of those that would weep for me, and the unjust mingling of the innocent with the guilty, for which your laws are infamous."

His companion mused for a moment; and then, laying his hand upon the arm of the gipsy, he replied, in a tone where kindness mingled with authority: "Mark me, Pharold!" he said, "you know that I am not one either to counsel you amiss, or to fall from you at a moment of need: base, indeed, should I be, were I to do so, after all you have done for me. But my resolutions are not yet fixed — my mind is not yet made up; and I must hear more, and examine deeply, ere I execute my half-formed purpose. Still you have no cause to fear; call upon me whenever you need

me; and, in the meantime, if you please, you can remove from the spot where you now are, but not so far that I cannot find you, for you must help me to the end of all this."

"To the common, at the back of Mrs. Falkland's woods?" asked the gipsy: "they will hardly seek us there."

"As good a spot as any," replied his companion; "and in case of necessity, Pharold, here, I have written down where you may always find me in this immediate neighbourhood; remembering, in the meantime, all that you have promised."

"I have promised — I have promised!" replied the gipsy; "and you never knew me break my word. But what is this you give me with the paper? I want not gold — and from you, William."

"But your people may," replied the other; "take it, take it, Pharold, it is never useless in such a life as yours."

"I will take it," answered the gipsy, "because it may give me more control over my people; for although amongst our nation there are men whose minds you little dream of, yet these I have here are not, perhaps, of the best, — not that they are evil either; but wild, and headstrong, and rash — as I was myself, when I was young."

They had already turned in their walk, and were now re-approaching the fire, round which the gipsies were gathered. Their conversation had not been without its share of interest to either, and each had much matter for reflection: so that — as thought is not that which makes a man speak, but that which keeps him silent — they advanced, without another word, to the spot where the stranger's horse stood. It was a fine powerful animal, of great bone and blood; but it was standing like a lamb, in the hands of a little boy, while the beautiful girl, whom we have mentioned as accosting the other travellers, now stood stroking his proud neck, and examining the accoutrements with a care that some people might have thought suspicious. As Pharold and his companion returned, however, she sprung away to the rest of her tribe, with a step as light as the moonshine on the sea.

“ She is very beautiful,” said the stranger, whose eye had rested on her for a moment; “ who is she, Pharold?”

“ She is my wife!” replied the gipsy abruptly.

His companion shook his head with a sigh, and putting his foot in the stirrup, mounted his horse, and rode away.

CHAP. III.

WHILE such events, as have just been described, were passing in the wood, the two travellers whom we first brought before the reader, and to whom we must now return, rode on; but begging leave to pass over all their farther journey, as it did not consist of more than half a mile, we may bring them safe to the gate of the very house, whose lights and shadows they had seen from the slope above the village.

By this time it was as dark as could well be desired. It was not exactly Egyptian darkness, for there was nothing in it that could be *felt*, but the sun was gone entirely; and the last fringe of his golden robe had swept the sky some time. The moon was not yet up, so that the stars had the sky all to themselves; but though they were shining as brightly as they did many a thousand years ago, when they were first sent glittering into the depths of space, they did very little to show the travellers their way.

Edward de Vaux, indeed, had taken it into his head to go to the back entrance of his aunt's house. But the truth is, he had worked himself up, as he came along, into a belief that there might be some fuss made upon his return; and had conjured up before his imagination every thing that might or could possibly occur, in which there was the least smack of ridicule, — although all the time he knew perfectly well, that his companion was of too generous and feeling a disposition, even to dream that any thing was ridiculous which sprung from the heart. He well knew, also, that those he was about to meet were, by education, and habit, and natural character, the last persons in the world to do or say any thing that was not graceful and *bienséant*. But still, as his imagination was not the most tractable imagination in the world, but roved hither and thither, whether he liked it or not, on all occasions, he could not get the better of her in the present instance; and, therefore, in order that every thing in the way of reception might pass as quietly and as quickly as possible, he rode up to the gate of the back court, and after feeling about for the bell for some time, he rang for admittance.

After a little delay, a coachman with a pow-

dered wig, and three rows of curls round his ears, opened the gates, with a lantern in his hand, and demanded what the strangers wanted; but without other reply, De Vaux rode into the yard with his companion, and springing to the ground, exposed his well-known face to the glare of the lantern, and the wondering eyes of old Joseph, the immortal coachman, who, bursting forth into a loud exclamation, called vehemently to the groom, and the helper, and the stable boy. "The oaken doors returned a brazen sound!" and not only those that the old curly-wigged official of the hammer-cloth called to his aid, appeared with ready promptitude, but eke a footman emerged from the passage of the servants' hall, and two or three pippin-faced housemaids were seen "peeping, from forth the alleys green," beyond.

Thus, as usual, De Vaux's precaution in regard to not making a bustle had, in fact, the very contrary effect in the house itself. But this was not all; his method of proceeding had the very contrary effect with his companion, also, to that which he had purposed. Colonel Manners certainly did think, in the first instance, that such an entrance was a somewhat

strange one for the house he saw before him; and when he found that it was, in truth, the stable-yard into which he had been taken, he thought the conduct of his friend still stranger. But, by this time, Charles Manners had known Edward de Vaux too long not to have some slight insight into his character, and into the weaknesses thereof; and as they had ridden along together upon that day's journey, various little traits, which might have escaped any but a very keen and a very friendly eye, had given him the key of his friend's feelings on his return; a key which he did not fail to apply on the present occasion. The result was, that he soon comprehended the general motives of De Vaux, though, perhaps, not all the little ins and outs of the business—ins and outs, by the way, which depended as much upon the plan and architecture of the house, and upon the fact of the first landing of the grand staircase leading at once into the little ante-room of the drawing-room, so that the voice and step of any one ascending could be recognised instantly, as upon any thing else in the world.

A slight smile curled Colonel Manners's lip, as he perceived what had been passing in his friend's mind; but he would not have had that

smile seen, for any recompense that could have been offered to him, unless it had been that of curing his friend of a folly. But he knew very well that De Vaux was not a man to be laughed out of any thing on earth; and that, with all his sensibility to ridicule, it was only so long as the sneer was silent and suppressed, that he cared anything about it. The moment that the laugh was open, his pride took arms to defend the position which he occupied, and every one knows that pride would always rather blow up the place than capitulate.

Colonel Manners did, indeed, wish that his friend could be taught, with the same sort of bold determination which he displayed in opposing the loud laugh, to despise the silent sneer, which is as often excited in the minds of the worldlings by traits of a good and noble nature as by folly or by awkwardness: but he knew that the only lessons he would receive upon the subject would be gentle ones, spoken by the voice of friendship without a touch of sarcasm.

“It is a pity, a great pity,” thought he, “that De Vaux, who affects to, and perhaps really does, despise the opinion of the general fool, should thus, as it were, make himself a

slave, to the laugh of his own fancy. I hope and trust, that his fair future bride may have influence enough to school him from these weaknesses."

Such was all his comment; and by the time it was made, their horses were in safe hands, and a footman, as antique as the coachman, was leading the way up the back stairs towards the drawing-room.

De Vaux was somewhat uneasy at the back stairs, and at a distant prospect of the kitchen, and the servants' hall, and the housekeeper's room; but Manners, though he saw it all, appeared to see nothing, rubbed his boot with his riding-whip, and talked of North America with all the zeal and volubility of a Mohawk. His companion was relieved; and, following the fat legs and white stockings of the old footman up the narrow staircase, they were soon in a small lobby, which led into the drawing-room. Soft Turkey carpets covered the floor of the lobby; against each of the piers stood a small antique table of tortoise-shell and brass; and in the deep recesses of the windows were placed those immense and beautiful china jars, which formed the glory of our great grandmothers. These again were filled with a composition of all the

sweet-scented leaves, gathered from the garden during the past year; and which, mingled with orris root and many a fragrant spice, diffused through the whole air a rich perfume of the eighteenth century.

But there was music upon the air of this bower as well as perfume. It was the music, however, of a sweet, low-toned woman's voice, speaking some sentences of which nothing could be distinguished but the melody. Nevertheless, it made the fitful colour come up for a moment in the cheek of Edward De Vaux; and whether his heart beat more quickly, or whether it maintained its even pulse, is a problem which we shall leave others to solve; for, the next moment, the door was thrown open, and the visitors all silently and unannounced entered the room.

It was a large handsome chamber, fitted up as unlike a modern drawing-room as possible. There was nothing in it of the last fashion, even of that day; but all was comfortable, and all bespoke both taste and affluence. On the walls were a few cabinet pictures, which at first appeared dark and dingy, but which, when any one looked farther, turned out gems; and on the rich and massive marble mantel-piece — which

was itself nearly equal in size, and quite equal in value, to a house in a modern square,—were placed pagodas, and feather fans, and screens, and many a little curiosity from different parts of the world,—bracelets that might have clasped the arm of Cleopatra, and idols that had been acquainted with Captain Cook. The room, like every clever room, had a great number of tables of all sorts and sizes; and at two of these tables, not with hospitable cares intent, but very busy with that sort of idleness which ladies call work, sat two fair dames, who, in point of age, might divide between them the apportioned years of man. The division of those seventy years, however, was very unequal, as the one nearest the door had monopolised at least forty-six of them to herself, and had left her daughter—for such was the other lady—not much more than twenty-three. They were both very handsome women, nevertheless; the mother feeling her years as light as a young king's crown, and the daughter, in addition to a very beautiful person, and a face where all that is fine was softened by all that is pleasing—having the advantage of youth, and all youth's graces. There was one peculiarity in her countenance, which, as it had something to do with her

mind, may as well be noticed. It was one of those faces which love not clouds — which smile where others frown ; and as she sat with her eyes bent upon a provoking knot in her work, which for the last ten minutes had defied all her efforts to disentangle it, she was still half laughing at the perversity of the silk, which seemed to take a pleasure in baffling her.

There was a third person in the drawing-room, younger than either, and very different from both. As she lay upon a sofa at the other side of the room, with a book in her hand, and her eyes bent upon the pages, the light of the lamp falling at the same time from above upon her clear fair forehead, on her beautiful eyelids with their long dark eyelashes, and on the marble white chiseling of her nose and upper lip, she did not appear to be more than eighteen ; but her real age, which we are bound to give, was twenty years, eleven months, and a few days, the exact number of which is forgotten. Her form was light and beautiful, and though those who did not love her might contend that she was certainly not equal to the Medicean Venus, yet she was a great deal more graceful than many another goddess, and as fair a specimen of the fairest of earth's creatures as the eye of

man has ever seen since Eve's ill-fated experiment in Eden.

Her hair was of that glossy golden brown, which is so beautiful and so seldom seen; and as the whole party had given up the expectation of their visiters for that night, she had turned back the shining curls which would have fallen into her eyes while reading; so that, with a wavy line on either side, they left her fair forehead bare, and formed a bunch of ringlets behind each ear, that might have defied the chisel of a Chantry.

As the door which admitted De Vaux and his companion was that which led to the back staircase, the party in the drawing-room concluded, naturally enough, that it was opened by one of the domestics on some of the many motives or pretexts upon which a servant can visit the drawing-room. No one took any notice, no one looked up; and the fair girl upon the sofa went on commenting upon the book in her hand, without knowing that any one was listening to her gentle criticism.

Thus each of the two visiters had time to make their own observations, if they chose it. A bright pleased smile lighted up the rough features of Colonel Manners, as he was thus at once admitted, without the help of an

Asmodeus, into the very heart of an English domestic circle, to each member of which he was a stranger. To him it was a sight full of pleasure and interest ; it was a sight that he had seldom seen even when in England, and which he had not seen at all for several years while serving abroad : but it was one which fancy had often renewed for him in his solitary wanderings, which had been painted to his eye in the still night, and in the tented field on distant shores, which had been to him a dream, whereunto imagination could cling without the apprehension of disappointment ; for he had ever thought of it as a thing whereof he might be the spectator, but never a sharer in its dearer ties.

As for Edward de Vaux, he *did not* choose to make any observations on the scene at all, for, more fastidious in anticipation than in reality, the moment he was in the midst of his domestic circle, a host of bright warm feelings rose up at once in his heart, and trampled every cold calculation of Chesterfieldism beneath their feet. Passing the old servant, who was himself amused to see the unconsciousness of the party in the drawing-room, De Vaux at once advanced towards the fair girl on the sofa. But there was a sound in his step different from that of any of the servants, which only

let him pass half across the room, ere her eyes were raised from the book and fell upon him. The sight instantly called into them a gleam as bright as sunshine after a storm, and the warm, eloquent blood rose into her cheek and brow, while with a voice of unquestionable joy, she exclaimed, "Edward! My dear aunt, here is Edward!"

The next moment, however, the light of her glance faded away, the blood ebbed back from her cheek, and from that moment it was scarcely perceivable that Edward de Vaux was anything more to her than an intimate friend. It was all the work of an instant, and Colonel Manners had only time to think, "This is all very odd!" ere the other two ladies rose to welcome his companion and himself; while the one who had spoken, gracefully but composedly, drew her small foot from the sofa to the ground, and advanced to meet her lover; contriving to execute what is sometimes a difficult manœuvre, without showing half an inch of her ankle, though it might very well have borne the display.

The elder lady now of course took the lead, and expressed her joy at the return of her nephew, in a manner which showed how compatible real dignity and grace are with every

zealous and kindly feeling. "And this," she said the next moment, "is of course Colonel Manners; though you have not introduced him to me, Edward; but Colonel Manners indeed requires no introduction here; for allow me to say, my dear sir, that, even were it not that you had saved the life of my nephew, and rendered him so many inestimable services, the son of your mother, who was my dear and early friend, would always be the most welcome of guests at my fire-side."

Colonel Manners bowed, and replied, "I have been lucky enough to find amongst my mother's papers, Madam, the letters of the Honourable Mrs. Falkland; and am aware how fortunate in a friend my parent was, during the greater part of her short life. Most proud shall I be if the son may merit some portion of the same regard which you bestowed upon the mother."

"You already command it, Colonel Manners," she replied: "Isadore, — Marian — Colonel Manners! My daughter — my niece, Miss De Vaux."

Now this introduction puzzled Colonel Manners a good deal, for reasons which may as well be explained. He had heard long before, while abroad, that his friend, Edward de Vaux, the

only son of Lord Dewry, was affianced to his cousin, and that their marriage was to take place as soon as the young heir of the barony could return to his native country, provided that the lady were by that time of age. In the course of their intimacy in other lands, De Vaux had often spoken of his fair cousin Marian, and had indeed on their return besought Colonel Manners to accompany him down to the house of his aunt, in order to act the part of bridesman at his wedding, which was to take place immediately. With this request we have seen that he complied; but he had completely made up his mind to the belief that his friend was about to be united to the daughter of Mrs. Falkland, and he was now surprised to find a Miss De Vaux, towards whom the manner of Edward de Vaux was not exactly that which men assume towards their sisters. Besides, her name was Marian, that of his promised bride; and although this discovery, leaping over the head of all his own preconceptions, puzzled Colonel Manners for a moment, he soon set it all to rights in his own mind, by supposing, what was in fact the truth, that the fair girl we have described was the daughter of Lord Dewry's brother.

All the while he was settling this to his own satisfaction, he was going through the manual of politeness, and doing De Vaux the favour of talking to Mrs. Falkland and her daughter, while the lover spoke in a lower tone to the other fair cousin. Whatever he said, however, seemed to have no very great effect upon her. She smiled, and seemed to answer him kindly and affectionately; but she displayed no further sign of that agitation which a girl in her situation might be expected to feel, on the return of her lover from a long and dangerous expedition. Once indeed she laid her hand upon the table near her, and Colonel Manners saw that, notwithstanding the general composure which she seemed to feel, that hand trembled so much, that, as if conscious its tremor might be perceived, she instantly withdrew it, and suffered her arm to fall gracefully by her side.

Manners marked all this, for from their first acquaintance, De Vaux had interested him, as much perhaps by the contrast of the little foibles of his character with the greater and nobler qualities it possessed, as by any other circumstance: he had gradually suffered a deep regard for him to rise up in his heart; he had permitted imagination to indulge herself with

bright pictures of his friend's domestic happiness; and in every little trait connected therewith, he had a sort of personal feeling, which made him seek to discover all that he wished might be.

After standing booted and spurred in the middle of the room for about ten minutes, and having learned that their servants had arrived with their baggage early in the morning of the same day, the two gentlemen retired to cast off their travelling costume, and attire themselves in apparel more suited to the drawing-room. Colonel Manners proceeded to the task systematically; and, although he knew that nothing on earth could ever make him handsome, yet he took every reasonable pains with his dress, and was soon ready to descend again, with that neat, clean, soldier-like appearance for which he was particularly distinguished. De Vaux acted differently, as may well be supposed, and giving his man the keys of the trunk mails, he cast himself on a chair; and, with his arm leaning on the dressing table, remained for full ten minutes in deep and somewhat melancholy thought, while the servant continued to torment him, every other minute,

with "Sir, do you want this?" or, "Sir, shall I do that?"

Into his private thoughts we shall not at present pry, although we consider that we have a right to do so whenever the necessities of the tale may demand it; but in this instance it is only requisite to give the ending reflection of his reverie, which may serve as a key to all the rest. "How cold Manners must have thought her reception of me! and yet her own lips, which never from her infancy spoke any thing but truth, have given me the assurance of her love. Well, we cannot change people's nature! and yet she was very different as a child!"

Such were the last dying words of his meditation; and then, starting up, he proceeded hastily to dress himself, addressing the servant with as much impatience as if the man had been dreaming instead of himself. "There, give me that coat," he exclaimed. "Set down the dressing-case here. Put those shoes on the other side of the table; and throw the stockings over the back of the chair. How slow you are, William! Here now, pull off these great boots, and then go and see that old Joseph does not poison the horses with any of his nostrums." These various commands the man obeyed with

as much promptitude as possible; and after he was gone, De Vaux proceeded to dress himself with all the haste of one who is afraid of being detected in loitering away his time. He was half way through the operation, and was just arranging his hair, when Manners, whose rooms were on the opposite side of the corridor, rejoined him; and they descended together, without having made any comment on the subject which was certainly next to the heart of Edward de Vaux. He felt that, in common delicacy, he could not begin it, though he would have given worlds, by any curious process of distillation, to have extracted Colonel Manners's first impression of her he loved; and Manners was resolved to see more and judge more clearly, ere he ventured even the common nothings which are usually said upon such occasions.

In the mean while, the ladies in the drawing-room had not, of course, refrained from comment on the appearance and arrival of their visitors. As the first object of all their affections was Edward de Vaux, his appearance and health naturally occupied several moments ere any thing else was thought of.

“How very well he looks!” said Mrs. Falkland; “his health seems greatly improved.”

“ I never saw him look so handsome,” said Isadore Falkland, “ though he was wrapped in that horrid great coat.”

Marian de Vaux said nothing, but she repaid her cousin for her praises of her lover’s looks by a smile as bright as an angel’s, which fluttered away in a warm blush, though it had nearly been drowned in some sparkling drops that rose into her eyes. So she turned away, and began playing with the seals on the writing table.”

“ I am delighted that Edward has prevailed on Colonel Manners to come down with him,” said Mrs. Falkland; “ for I have longed to see him, on his mother’s account.”

“ And I, because he saved Edward’s life,” said Marian de Vaux.

“ And I am delighted too,” said Isadore Falkland, “ because he seems a very agreeable gentlemanly man, though certainly a very ugly one—I think, as ugly a man as I ever saw.”

“ His face is certainly not handsome,” replied her mother; “ but his figure seems remarkably fine. His mother was as beautiful a woman as ever lived; and I have heard that, till he was twenty, he was equally good looking.”

“ Poor fellow!” cried Isadore; “ he has

been very unfortunate, then; for it is certainly better to be born ugly, than to become so afterwards."

"I did not think him ugly at all," said Marian de Vaux.

"That was because you only saw the man that saved Edward's life," replied Isadore, laughing; "but he is not beautiful, I can assure you, Marian."

"Happy are they, my dear Isadore," replied her mother, "who can 'see Othello's visage in his mind;' and I do not think you, my dear girl, are one, either, to value any one for their personal appearance."

"No, no, no, mamma! I am not," answered Miss Falkland; "but still, some sensible old gentleman has said that a good countenance is the best letter of recommendation; and now, had it not been that you had known Colonel Manners's mother, or that he had saved Edward's life——Yet notwithstanding ——," she added, breaking off her sentence abruptly, "after all, perhaps, his face is just the one from which we should expect a man to save people's lives, and do a great many brave and noble things."

"I think so, certainly," answered Mrs. Falkland. "However ugly it may be, I have seldom

seen a face through which a fine mind shone out so distinctly."

Such was the tenor of the conversation that went on in the drawing-room, till the two gentlemen returned, and, by their presence, took themselves out of the range of topics. Other subjects were soon started, and filled the hours till supper time. Edward de Vaux naturally took the place he loved best; and what passed between him and his fair cousin was not always loud enough in its tone, or general enough in its nature, to be very distinct to the rest of the party, or very interesting to the reader. Manners, who knew as well as any one how to effect a diversion in favour of a friend, placed himself near the other ladies, and displayed such stores of varied information as well occupied their attention. Those stores were somewhat desultory, perhaps, but they were gained from every source. Man, and all the fine and all the amusing traits of his character; countries, and all their beauties and their disadvantages; the history of other times, the varied events of the present; matters of taste and of science, the light wit of a playful imagination, and the choice knowledge procured by very extensive

reading; all seemed to come within the scope of his mind. All, too, had been refined and ornamented by judgment and good feeling, and his conversation had still the peculiar charm of appearing far less profound than it really was. It was all light, and playful, and gay; and yet, on rising from it, one felt improved and instructed, without well knowing how or in what. His memory, too, was excellent, and stored with a number of little anecdotes and beautiful scraps of poetry; and, without ever seeming to intrude them, he knew how to mingle them in the general current of what was passing, with tact almost as skilful as that of the greatest writer and most amiable man that centuries have witnessed upon earth—Sir Walter Scott.

So extensive, indeed, seemed to have been the reading of their new acquaintance, that Mrs. Falkland wondered thereat in silence; while Isadore, well knowing that there is scarcely any question on the face of the earth that a young and pretty woman may not ask of a man under forty with perfect *bienséance* and propriety, looked up with a smile, and said—“Pray tell me, Colonel Manners, where you have found time, while you have been defeating the King’s enemies

night and day, to read every thing of every kind that is worth reading?"

"Oh, Madam," he replied, "I am afraid I have read but little as compared with what I might have done. A soldier's life is the most favourable of all others for general reading; though, perhaps, not for pursuing steadily any particular study. He is for a few days full of active employment, and then for many more has hardly any thing to do; and if he gives one half of his spare time to reading, he will, I believe, read more than many a philosopher. The only difficulty is in procuring books that are worth the trouble of poring over."

In such conversation passed the hours till supper; for those were days of supper,—that most pleasant and sociable of all ways of acquiring the nightmare. When the meal was announced, it of course caused some derangement in the local position of the parties; and Edward de Vaux being brought for a moment nearer to his aunt than his other occupations had hitherto permitted, she took the opportunity of saying,—“I hope, Edward, your father will not be at all offended at your coming here first. He is sometimes a little *ombrageux*,

you know ; and I would advise you to ride over to-morrow as early as possible."

" Oh ! no fear of his being offended, my dear aunt," he replied. " In the first place, he wrote to give me that assurance. In the next place, as we chose to ride our own two best horses down, rather than trust them to two break-neck grooms, we could not have gone seventeen miles farther to-night : and in the last place," he added, in a lower tone, " you know that his Lordship never likes visiters to take him by surprise ; and as the invitation to Manners was yours, not his, of course I could not have brought him to the Hall without writing, which I had no time to do. There is nothing he hates so much as any one taking him by surprise."

Almost as he spoke, the old servant Peter, who had retired after announcing supper, once more threw the door open with a portentous swing, and proclaimed, in a loud voice, " Lord Dewry !" Something like a smile glanced upon Mrs. Falkland's lip, as the sudden and unexpected arrival of her brother contrasted somewhat strangely with what her nephew had just been saying. She paused in her progress to

the supper room, however; and, in a moment after, with a slow step, which was languid without being feeble, Lord Dewry entered the ante-room, and came forward towards them.

While he is in the act of doing so, let us paint him to the reader—at least, as far as the outward man is concerned. Of the inward man more must be said hereafter. He was tall—perhaps six feet high, or very near it—and well made, though now excessively thin. His frame was broad, and had been very powerful; his shoulders wide, his chest expansive, and his waist remarkably small. In feature, too, it could be still discerned that he had once been a very handsome man; but his face was now thin and sharp, and his complexion extremely sallow. His eyes, however, were still fine, and his teeth of a dazzling whiteness. He might have numbered sixty years, but he looked somewhat older, although he had taken a good deal of pains with his dress, and lay under considerable obligations to his valet-de-chambre. The first impression produced on the mind of a stranger by the appearance of Lord Dewry was imposing, but not pleasing; and, unfortunately, the unpleasant effect did not wear off. He looked very much the Peer and the man of conse-

quence ; but there was a gloomy cloud upon his brow which was not melancholy, and a curl of the lip which was not a smile, and both prepared the mind of all who approached him, for not the most agreeable man in the world. His general expression, too, was cold. He had a look like the easterly wind, at once chilling and piercing ; and, though report said that he had been a very fascinating man in his youth, and had not always made the best use of his powers of pleasing, he did not seem at present to consider it at all necessary to use any effort to render himself agreeable, farther than the common forms of society and what was due to his own station, required.

“ Well, my Lord,” said Mrs. Falkland, as he came forward, “ I am happy to see you come to welcome our wanderer back again.”

As she spoke, Edward advanced to his father, who grasped his hand eagerly, while a smile of unfeigned pleasure, for a single instant, spread a finer expression over the worn features of the Baron. “ Welcome back, Edward !” he said ; “ welcome back ! you look remarkably well ! I have to apologise, Maria,” he added, turning to his sister after this brief salutation bestowed upon his son ; “ I have to apologise for coming

thus, without notice; but I have some business to-morrow, down at the park house, of which I knew nothing till this morning; and I also wished to see Edward, whose devoirs here," — and he turned towards Marian, — "I knew must first be paid, according to all the rules of gallantry. How are you, my fair niece? You look a little pale. How are you, Isadore?" And the Peer, without waiting to hear how any one was, cast his eyes upon the ground, and fixing upon a spot in the carpet, seemed calculating geometrically the precise measurement of all its strange angles.

"We were just going to supper, my Lord," said Mrs. Falkland; "will you come with us? But first let me introduce you to Colonel Manners." Lord Dewry acknowledged the introduction by a cold bow, while Manners said some words of course; and the question of supper being renewed, the nobleman agreed to go down with the party to the table, though he bestowed a word or two of heavy censure on the meal they were about to take.

"It is, nevertheless," said Colonel Manners, "from its very hour, the most sociable one of the whole day; for by this time, in general, all the cares, and annoyances, and labours of the

busy daylight are over; and, as is justly observed — I forget where — “nothing remains for us but enjoyment and repose.”

“Eating and sleep!” muttered Lord Dewry; “the delights of a hog and a squirrel:” but as what he said did not seem intended to be heard, Colonel Manners made no reply, though he did hear it; and the party seated themselves round the supper table, in walking towards which these few sentences had passed. For some time the presence of the Peer seemed destined to cast a gloom over the society in which he had so suddenly appeared. His manner even here, in the midst of his nearest relations, and by the side of his newly returned son, was cold, stern, and gloomy, only broken by some flash of cynical scorn for things that other people valued, or by some biting sneer at the follies and weaknesses of his fellow creatures.

To his niece, Marian de Vaux, however, his conduct was very different. At table he placed himself by her side; made an evident effort to render himself agreeable to her; and whenever he spoke to her, softened his tone, and endeavoured to call up a smile. Such was his conduct on the present evening; but it may be necessary also to stretch our view over the past, for

his behaviour to his niece had always formed a strange contrast to his conduct towards others. The first effect of her presence, when he had not seen her for some time, was almost always to throw him into a fit of deep gloom; and those who watched him narrowly, might have remarked his lip move, as if he were speaking to himself, though no sound was heard. From this fit of abstraction he generally roused himself soon, but it was evidently at the cost of great efforts; and then he would speak to his niece with a degree of tenderness which bordered on timidity, and treat her with attention approaching to gallantry. Any one who saw him in conversation with her, might easily conceive him to have been the fascinating and courtly man that report had represented him in his younger days; and there was a kindness and gentleness in his whole demeanour towards her, which, together with the family name that she bore, had often caused her to be taken for his daughter. Nevertheless, even across the moments when he seemed exerting himself to please her, would break occasionally the same fits of gloom, called up by words apparently the least calculated to produce any such effect. They were then always brief, however; and it

seemed that the original exertion to conquer the dark feelings which the first sight of his niece appeared to arouse, was sufficient to hold all the rest in check.

It was only to her, however, that he was thus gentle. Her presence made no difference in his conduct towards others; and, the moment his attention or his speech was called from the conversation with his niece, he seemed to become a different being,—dark, stern, and overbearing.

Such a demeanour, of course, was not calculated to promote any thing like cheerful conversation; and the atmosphere of his gloom would have affected all those by whom he was surrounded, and extinguished every thing like pleasure for that night, had it not been for the counteracting influence of Colonel Manners. He, without the slightest touch of obtrusiveness or self-conceit, by a just estimation of himself and others, was always in possession of his own powers of mind; and never suffered the presence of any other individual—unless, indeed, it was that of one whom he could at once admire and love—to give a tone to his behaviour, to restrain him in what he chose to say, or to frighten him from what he chose to do.

He took the tone of his conversation from his own heart, and from its feelings at the time; and, guarded by fine sensibilities, good taste, knowledge of the world, and a refined education, there was not the slightest fear that he would ever give pain to any one whose approbation he valued. Of all this he was himself well aware; and, after a few moments given to something like wonder at the character of Lord Dewry, he proceeded in the same manner as if such a person had not been in existence.

Isadore Falkland, as soon as she found that such powerful support was prepared for her, boldly resisted the influence of her uncle's presence also. Mrs. Falkland, whose naturally strong mind was not unfitted to cope with her brother, held on the even tenor of her way; and Edward De Vaux joining in, the conversation soon became once more general and cheerful. It had taken another turn, however; and the subject had become the mutual adventures of Colonel Manners and Edward de Vaux, in the war which was then raging between France and England, in North America. Many was the wild enterprise, many the curious particular that they had to speak of; "hair's breadth escapes, and perils imminent" — scenes

and persons quite fresh and strange to Europeans; a new world, and all that a new world contained, with a system of warfare totally different from any thing that had ever been seen on the older continents. At that time, neither a barbarous policy, nor a criminal negligence, had produced any of those lamentable results which are rapidly exterminating the Indian nations of America: but, at the same time, a most barbarous policy had — instead of endeavouring to civilise and soften the dusky natives of the woods, the real lords of the land — had engaged them, with all their fierce and horrid modes of warfare, in the contention between the two great bands of European robbers, who were struggling for the country that really belonged to the savage. Of these Indian nations, and of their wild habits, both Manners and De Vaux spoke at large; and many a strange scene had they witnessed together, amongst the uncultivated woods and untamed people of the transatlantic world.

Often, too, Manners, with kind and friendly zeal, would make Edward De Vaux the hero of his tale; and while he related — as if he were speaking of ordinary events — some gallant exploit or some noble action, would suffer

his eye to glance for a single instant, unperceived, to the countenance of Marian de Vaux. It was generally calm and tranquil; beautiful, but still; yet occasionally, when the moment of danger or of interest came, and when Edward extricated himself gallantly from some difficult or dangerous situation, there was a bright light beamed up in her eyes, a long-drawn breath, and a flickering colour, which satisfied Manners that all was well.

Nevertheless, Manners could not, of course, speak of his friend's adventures, without a little delicate manœuvring, in order to make the tale appear more a general than a personal one; nor could he continue the subject long. Often, therefore, he returned to the Indians, and often to the state of America in general, while Mrs. Falkland and her daughter gave him, by manifold questions and observations, full opportunity of varying the subject *ad libitum*. They sought to know, amongst other facts, what link of connection could possibly have sprung up between the Indians and the Europeans, so strong as to make the savage nations have any feeling of regard or interest towards either of the countries which only struggled to

monopolise the means of plundering and destroying them.

“ Oh, you must not think, my dear madam,” answered Colonel Manners, “ that all persons who visit America are actuated by one selfish motive, or pursue one system of fraud and oppression towards the Indians. On the contrary, there are many who go over there with the philanthropic motive of civilising and benefiting the savage tribes themselves, and who, in the endeavour to effect this object, display a degree of wisdom, perseverance, judgment, and courage, that is quite astonishing. Nor are these qualities without the most immense effect upon the wild aborigines of the land, who look up to such men almost as they would to a god. De Vaux and I know a very remarkable instance of the kind, in one of the most noble spirited and excellent of human beings, to whom we are both under no small obligations. He nursed me through a long and severe fever, when my senses were quite gone; and afterwards enabled me, by his influence with the Indians, to render your nephew some small service — which, however, was entirely attributable to his exertions.

“Nay, nay, Manners,” replied De Vaux; “to yours as much as his, and more; for had you not ventured, at the head of a party of Indians, two hundred miles into a hostile country, not a step of which you knew” ——

“Well, well, De Vaux,” answered his friend, “you must own that he went with me, though he did not know you, and I did. You must not take away from the merit of my hero, for such I intend to make him in these ladies’ eyes. I know not, however, how you will like a hero of sixty, Miss Falkland; but such, I must confess, he is at least. He has now lived, for many years, upon the very borders of civilisation, or rather beyond it, for his house is surrounded by forests and Indian wigwams. He has never taken any part in the contentions of the tribes, and seems equally venerated by all, showering good and blessings upon the heads of every one who approaches him. He is deeply versed in the laws and the manners of the natives, too; and, though a finished and elegant scholar and gentleman, conforms, when necessary, to their usages, in a manner that is at once amusing and admirable. He is, at the same time, the most skilful and indefatigable hunter that the world, perhaps, ever produced,—an accomplish-

ment which renders him still more venerable in the eyes of the Indians, who, on account of all these qualities, have named him, "The White Father."*

"Delightful creature!" exclaimed Miss Falkland, with her beautiful eyes sparkling like diamonds; "but tell me, Colonel Manners, tell me, what is he like? Mamma, if you have no objection, I will go out, and marry him."

"None in the world, my love!" answered Mrs. Falkland; "but perhaps it may be better, first, to send over and ask whether he will marry you."

"That he will of course," answered she: "but, Colonel Manners, you have not told me what he is like — in person I mean."

"Oh, he is fresh and hale, as a life of exercise and a heart at rest can make him," replied Manners. "Indeed, he is as handsome a man as ever I saw."

"Oh, that will do exactly!" cried Miss Falkland, laughing. Colonel Manners smiled too; but there was a tinge of melancholy in his smile; for, however much he might have made

* We need hardly point out to the reader, that though the name has been changed, the character of a well-known individual is not here overdrawn.

up his mind to the fact, that personal beauty is an indispensable requisite to obtain woman's love, yet every little trait which served to confirm that opinion touched a gloomy chord in his bosom, which again called forth the tone of many a harmonising feeling, and made somewhat sad music within.

“And pray, Colonel Manners,” said Lord Dewry, with the cold, if not supercilious, tone which he generally employed, “what may be the name of the wonderful person who does all these wonderful things?”

“The name, my Lord,” replied Colonel Manners, coolly — “the name of the gentleman who went two hundred miles into the Indian country to save your son, Captain de Vaux, from the tomahawk, without ever having seen him, is one known throughout the greater part of America, — Sir William Ryder.”

Lord Dewry turned suddenly still paler than he was before; and then as red as fire. Whether it was that some feelings had been excited by that name, with which he did not choose to trust his lips, or whether his emotion proceeded from temporary illness, did not appear; but he replied nothing; and Colonel Manners, by whom the Peer's agitation had not been totally

unmarked, went on. "If I remember right," he said, "I heard Sir William Ryder ask after your Lordship's health from De Vaux, and say that he had known you many years ago, in England."

"I once knew, Sir," replied Lord Dewry, drawing himself up, "I once knew an unworthy blackguard of that name, who is now, I believe, in America; but he has no right to claim acquaintance with me."

De Vaux looked at his father with astonishment, and then turned his eyes towards Manners, as if to pray him patience; but his friend was perfectly calm, and replied,—“Your Lordship must allude to some different person, as the description does not at all correspond with him of whom I speak.”

“No, no, Sir,” answered the Baron, reddening, “I speak of the same person,—there can be no doubt of it,—a gambling beggar!—

“If you do speak of the same person, Lord Dewry,” replied Colonel Manners, quite calmly, “I must beg of you to remember, that you speak of my friend; and in the presence of one who does not like to hear his friend's character assailed.”

“Indeed, Sir, indeed!” exclaimed Lord Dewry, rising; “do you kindly wish to dictate

to me, in my sister's house, what I am to say of a person who, it seems, has formed an unfortunate intimacy with my own son; and is, as I said, a gambling beggar?"

Manners paused a moment. He and De Vaux were alike under deep obligations to the man of whom Lord Dewry spoke; and he felt that the language used by the Peer was not only a gross personal insult to both of them, but especially to himself, who had been the means of introducing him to his companion, and who had the moment before bestowed such high and unqualified praise on the very person whom he now heard reviled. He remembered Lord Dewry's age and situation, however, and his own particular position, and endeavoured to moderate his reply as much as possible; though to pass the matter over in silence, or to leave the charges of the Peer without direct contradiction, he felt to be impossible, as an officer, a man of honour, or the friend of Sir William Ryder.

"Your personal opinion, my Lord," he answered, "you may, of course, express to your own son, or your own family, whenever you like, provided it be not injurious to any friend of mine. In which last case, I shall, as before, beg your Lordship to refrain in my presence,

for I am not a man to hear a friend calumniated in silence."

"Calumniated, Sir! calumniated?" exclaimed Lord Dewry.

"Yes, Sir, such was the word I made use of," replied Colonel Manners, "because the expressions you applied to Sir William Ryder were calumnious, if applied to my friend, whom a long life of noble actions raises above suspicion; but I trust and believe we are speaking of different persons."

"'Tis well, Sir; 'tis very well!" replied Lord Dewry, appearing to grow somewhat cooler; "'tis extremely well!—I trust it is as you say.—Give me a glass of soda water. Maria, I shall now retire to rest; I am somewhat fatigued: my apartments are, I think, opposite the drawing room. Good night!—Colonel Manners, I wish you good night!" And, bowing with low and bitter courtesy, he left the room.

Colonel Manners, whatever might be his feelings, and whatever might be his intentions, took no notice of what had passed, after Lord Dewry left the room, although he could not but feel that he had been insulted by a man whose age protected him; but both Mrs. Falkland and De Vaux spoke upon the subject, after a mo-

ment's painful pause. The first apologised with dignified mildness for the occurrence, and assuring her visitor that something strange and extraordinary must have irritated her brother during the course of the day, or that he would not so far have forgot his usual *bienséance*; and the latter pressed his friend with kindly earnestness to forget what had occurred, and not to suffer it to affect his conduct, or abridge his stay.

Colonel Manners smiled, and suffered himself to be overcome: "You know, De Vaux, that I am not one to be driven from my position by the first fire," he said; "and as I suppose that Lord Dewry and myself will not meet very frequently after the present time, we shall have but few opportunities of being as agreeable to each other as we have been to-night."

Thus ended the conversation, and soon after the party separated, each grieving not a little that the harmony of the evening had been so unfortunately interrupted, when there was no reason to expect such an event.

CHAP. IV.

THE mind of man is a curious thing, in some respects not at all unlike an old Gothic castle, full of turnings and windings, long dark passages, spiral staircases, and secret corners. Amongst all these architectural involutions, too, the ideas go wandering about, generally very much at random, often get astray, often go into a wrong room and fancy it their own; and often, too, it happens that, when one of them is tripping along quite quietly, thinking that all is right, open flies a door; out comes another, and turns the first back again—sometimes rudely, blowing her candle out, and leaving her in the dark—and sometimes, taking her delicately by the tips of the fingers, and leading her to the very spot whence she set out at first.

Colonel Manners, retiring to his bedchamber, though he seldom, if ever, indulged in reveries of happiness which were never to be realised, could not help sitting down to think over the events of the evening, and the circle to which

he had been introduced. In the first place, he took great care to turn the idea of Lord Dewry, and his rudeness, out of the castle, being a great economiser of pleasant thoughts; and then, with somewhat of a sigh (the sort of semi-singultus which people give to something irremediable in their own fate, while contemplating the state of another), he thought, "De Vaux is a very happy man! and yet," he continued, "though she is very beautiful, too, and evidently has deeper feelings beneath that calm exterior, yet, had I had to choose between the two cousins, I would have fixed upon the other." As he thus went on thinking, Colonel Manners began to remember that his thoughts might be treading upon dangerous ground: he did not know even that they might not be drawn into an ambuscade of dreams and wishes which he had long, as he fancied, defeated for ever; and, therefore, he hastily beat the general, and marched the whole detachment off to join his own regiment. What we mean is, that he turned his mind to military affairs, and would very fain have thought no more either of Mrs. Falkland's domestic circle, or of the future happiness of his friend; or, at least, he would have schooled himself, if he did think of such things

at all, not to extract any personal feelings therefrom, but to let them be to him as matters in which he had no farther share than as in a passing pageant of a pretty device, through which he was to move, as he would have done through a minuet, forgetting it all as soon as the music ceased. Still, however, as he went on thinking, open flew some of the doors of association, and, ever and anon, out started some fresh idea, which brought him back to the happiness of his friend, and the delight of seeing a family circle of one's own, and looks of affection, and a joyful welcome after toil, and exertion, and danger were over.

As sleep, however, is a strong fortress against the attack of dangerous thoughts, he resolved to take refuge there from a force that was too powerful for him; and, going to bed, he was soon within the gates of slumber. But fancy turned traitor within his fortress, and, ere long, whole troops of dreams poured in, laying his heart prostrate before imaginations which he had repelled with veteran courage for more than fourteen years. There was, of course, no resisting under such circumstances: the garrison threw down their arms, and he went on dreaming of love and domestic happiness all night. It did him

no harm, however, for one of the most curious phenomena which take place in regard to those wild visitants, dreams, occurred in this case. The visions that had come to him had all been as vivid as reality: he had felt more and more acutely than he had, perhaps, ever felt in life; there had been pleasures and pains, intense and varying; events and feelings which, had they occurred in waking existence, he would have remembered till the last hour of his life; and yet, when he woke, he had forgot the whole. It was as if some after-sleep, with a sponge dipped in Lethe, had passed by, and wiped out from the tablet of memory all but a few rough scratches, sufficient to show that dreams had been there.

The day was yet young when he woke; but Manners was habitually an early riser,—a habit that generally springs from two causes—vigorous health, a frame without languor, and easily refreshed; or from a refined heart, at ease within itself. When he had prayed,—for all noble-minded beings pray; and the only truly great pride is the pride with which one owns oneself the servant of God: it is the soldier pointing to the colours under which he serves;—when he had prayed, he dressed himself, somewhat slowly,

gazing from time to time out of the window, over the rich landscape sparkling with dew and morning ; and then, opening his door, went out with the purpose of breathing the fresh air of the early day. The windows at either end of the corridor were still closed, for it had scarcely struck six, but the skylight over the staircase gave light enough ; and Colonel Manners, descending, found a housemaid, with unbought roses on her cheeks, and blue arms, busily washing the marble hall, and the steps that went out into the garden, which, stretching away to the south-west, was separated from the park in which the house stood, by a haw-haw and a light fence.

Give me a flower-garden, in the early morning, with its dry gravel walks shining in the fresh sun-beams, and all the thousands of flowers, which man's care and God's bounty have raised to beautify our dwellings, expanding their refreshed petals to the young light. The garden into which Colonel Manners now went forth was an old-fashioned one, with manifold beds, arranged in as many mathematical figures. Each bed, fringed with its close-cut green border of box, was full of as many flowers as it would hold and as the season afforded ; and though of

late many a foreign land has been ransacked to procure new exotics for our grounds, yet even then the garden was not without its rich assortment of flowering shrubs; some still bearing the blossom, some fallen into the fruit. Between the beds — and, as the garden was of very great extent, the beds were not very close together — were spaces of soft green turf; sometimes flanked with holly, or hedged with yew, so as to make a sort of little bowling-green; sometimes wide open to the gay sunshine, and full of innumerable thrushes and blackbirds, hopping along, with their fine shanks sunk amidst the blades of grass. Here and there, too, was an arbour, covered with clematis; and hot-houses and green-houses, now and then, peeped out from behind the shrubberies, on the sunny side of the garden.

Colonel Manners took his way along a walk that flanked the inclosure to the east, and which, running by the side of the haw-haw, a little elevated above the park and surrounding country, gave, on the one side, an extensive prospect over a rich and smiling landscape, with the deer bounding over the grass, and the cattle lowing along the distant upland; and, on the other, showed the garden — somewhat formal,

perhaps, but neat, and beautiful, and sparkling. He was a soldier, and a man of the world, and he loved books, and he did not dislike society; but, perhaps, there never was a man upon earth who more thoroughly enjoyed a solitary morning walk amidst flowers and beautiful scenery — scenery in which one can pause and fill one's eye with fair sights, while the ideas springing from each particular blossom, or from the whole general view, can ramble out into a world of indistinct loveliness, wherein one can scarcely be said to think, but rather to live in a sensation of happiness which approaches near to heaven.

Although, as we have observed, one can scarcely be said to think, yet there is no situation on the earth — or very few — in which a man so little likes to have his thoughts interrupted, and his fine imaginations forcibly called back to the dull ground. Colonel Manners, therefore, was not very well pleased when, after following the walk which he had chosen to the end, he heard footsteps beyond the bushes, round which the path now swept.

Had these footsteps, indeed, possessed that light peculiar sound which is produced by a small and pretty foot, Colonel Manners, who never objected to see the beautiful things of

nature enhanced by the presence of the most beautiful, might not have thought his reveries unworthily disturbed. In the present instance, however, the sound was very different: it was the dull, heavy, determined step of a foot that takes a firm hold of the ground; and, as he went on, he was not surprised to meet with Lord Dewry at the turning of the walk.

Colonel Manners, if he had not forgot all about their discussion of the preceding evening, had remembered it as little as possible; and, being one of those happy men who never suffer any annoyance of such a nature to rankle at the heart, he had settled the matter in his own mind by thinking that the old gentleman had the toothach, or some of those corporeal pangs or infirmities which cause and excuse ill-temper, and sometimes even rudeness, at that period of life when the passing away of those mighty blessings, vigour and health, is, in itself, matter enough for irritation. As, however, he never liked to subject himself to occasions for commanding his temper, he proposed, in the present instance, merely to give the Peer "good morning," and pass on upon his walk.

This purpose he was not permitted to execute; as no sooner did Lord Dewry come op-

posite to him than he stopped abruptly, and answered Colonel Manners's salutation by a cold and haughty bow. "Colonel Manners," he said, "I saw you come into the garden from the windows of my room, and I have done myself the honour of seeking you."

The Peer spoke slowly and calmly; but Manners, who doubted not that his intention was to apologise, was both somewhat surprised that so proud a man should do so at all, and likewise somewhat puzzled by a sneering curl of the nostril, and a slight twinkling of the eyelid, which seemed to betray a spirit not quite so tranquil as his tone would have indicated:—"Your Lordship does me honour," he replied; "what are your commands?"

"Simply as follows, Colonel Manners," replied Lord Dewry:—"I think you last night made use of the term *calumny*, as applied to part of my discourse; and, as I am not in the habit of being insulted without taking measures to redress myself, I have followed you hither, for the purpose of arranging the necessary result."

Colonel Manners felt inclined to smile, but he refrained, and replied seriously, "My Lord, I wish to heaven you would forget this business."

You thought fit to apply the strongest terms of injury to a gentleman for whom I had expressed my friendship and gratitude ; and I pronounced such terms to be calumnious, in regard to my friend, but expressed, at the same time, my belief that we were speaking of different persons. For heaven's sake, let the matter rest where it does ; I meant no personal insult to you : I trust you meant none to me. I came down here the friend of your son, on a joyful occasion, and it would pain me not a little to go away the enemy of his father."

The lip of Lord Dewry curled with a bitter and galling sneer. " Colonel Manners," he said, " I believe that you wear a sword !"

" I do, Sir," replied Manners, reddening ; but I should be unworthy to wear one, did I draw it against a man old enough to be my father."

Lord Dewry, too, reddened. " If, as I perceive, Sir," he said, " you intend to make my age your protection, I trust you have calculated the consequences to your reputation, and will understand the light in which I view you. When I am willing, Sir, to wave all respect of age, I do not see what you have to do with it."

" Much, my Lord," answered Colonel Man-

ners; "much have my own conscience and my own honour to do with it."

"Do not let an officer who is refusing to fight, talk of honour, Sir," replied Lord Dewry.

"You cannot provoke me to forget myself, Lord Dewry," answered the other; "I hold all duelling in abhorrence, and as any thing but a proof of courage: but when the encounter is to be between a young and active man, and one of your Lordship's age and probable habits, it is murder outright. Your Lordship will excuse me for saying, that I think the business a very foolish one, and that I must insist upon its being dropped."

"I shall drop it, as far as regards the endeavour to make a man fight who is not disposed to do so," replied Lord Dewry, with an angry and disappointed, rather than a contemptuous, smile, for which he intended it to be; "but, as a matter of course, I shall make generally known the fact, that you have refused to draw your sword when called upon."

Colonel Manners laughed. "My Lord," he answered, "I have drawn it in eleven different battles, in his Majesty's service; I have been wounded nine times, and I am quite satisfied with a certain degree of reputation obtained in

these affairs, without seeking to increase it by the encounter to which your Lordship would provoke me."

Lord Dewry stood and gazed at him, for a moment or two, with a heavy lowering brow, as if contemplating how he might lash his adversary to the course he sought to bring him to pursue; but the calm and confident courage and cool determination of Colonel Manners foiled him even in his own thoughts; and, after glaring at him thus while one might count twenty, he exclaimed, "You shall repent it, Sir! you shall repent it!"

"I do not think it, my Lord," replied Manners: "I wish you good morning;" and he turned calmly on his heel, retreading, with slow steps, the path he had followed from the house.

In the mean time, the pace of Lord Dewry was much more rapid; but for a moment we must pause ourselves, and seize this opportunity of looking into his bosom, and seeing some of the motives which, like Cyclopes, in the cave of Vulcan, were busy forging all those hot thunderbolts that he was dealing about so liberally: — *some*, we only say *some*; for were we to look at all, we should have a catalogue too long for

recapitulation here. The fact then, was, that Lord Dewry had been greatly irritated on the previous day, by a conversation of not the most pleasant kind, concerning the very Sir William Ryder of whom he was destined to hear such high praises the moment he set his foot within his sister's doors. Now, for various reasons, unto himself best known, the noble Lord hated this Sir William Ryder with a most reverent and solicitous hatred, and would willingly have given a thousand pounds to any one who would have brought him proof positive that he was dead and safely deposited in that earthy chan-cery, the archives of which, though they contain many a treasured secret, can never meet the searching eye of this inquisitive world. What, then, were his feelings, when he heard that this very man, in regard to whom his darkest passions had been stirred up that very day, and towards whom he had nourished an evergreen animosity for many years — when he heard that, through the instrumentality of Colonel Manners, this man had been made intimate with his only son.

This then was Manners's offence ; but, had it been likely to end there, Lord Dewry might even have forgiven it. Such, however, was not

the case : Lord Dewry had some reason to believe that the object of his hatred might visit England ; and imagination instantly set up before him the picture of his son, Colonel Manners, and Sir William Ryder meeting and discussing many things that would be better let alone. Now, he trusted and believed that, as far as his ancient enemy was concerned, he could manage his son, and cause him to break off a connection which had not been of long duration ; but, at the same time, he judged it necessary to place a barrier between him and Colonel Manners himself, so as to cut off every link of communication between Edward de Vaux and Sir William Ryder ; and, for this purpose, he at once determined to quarrel with his son's friend ; which, in his own irritable and irritated state of mind, he found it not at all difficult to accomplish. On the preceding night he had begun, therefore, with real good-will ; and, as he was a man totally devoid of any thing like personal fear, and remembered that he had once been a remarkably good swordsman, while he forgot that he was sixty, he was really well pleased when Manners made use of a term which promised to give him an opportunity of bringing their dispute to such an issue as must absolutely put an end to the

intimacy between his son and Colonel Manners for ever. “ Even should I receive a wound,” he thought, “ so much the better ;” and, strange as it is to say, had Lord Dewry even contemplated being killed in the encounter he sought, he would have looked upon it with less apprehension than might be supposed, when thereunto was attached the certainty of his son being separated for ever from Charles Manners and from Sir William Ryder : so much less terrible does it often appear to our contradictory nature to meet the eye of God than to encounter the scrutiny of beings like ourselves.

Frustrated by the coolness and firmness of his opponent in the grand object of his morning's walk, he now turned towards the house, animated with a strong desire of accomplishing his purpose by other means. The Peer now determined, as it was impossible to make Colonel Manners the aggressor, to induce his own family to take the initiative, and break with the object of his dislike, or of his apprehension, — for, perhaps, there might be a little of both at the bottom of his heart ; — and, with a resolution which was the more imperious and domineering from having seldom suffered contradiction, he sought the apartment of his son.

Edward de Vaux was just up, and was in the act of putting on, one after another, the different parts of his apparel. As this act of clothing one's person, however much pleasure people may take in it habitually, is, in itself, a laborious and troublesome operation, De Vaux's servant was helping him therein; but the appearance of Lord Dewry, and a hint, not to be mistaken, sent the man out of the room, while the noble Lord betook him to a chair; and his son, seeing that there was not a little thunder in the dark cloud upon his father's brow, sat, expectant and half dressed, wondering what was to come next.

“Edward,” said his father, in a tone which was intended at once to express parental affection, some slight touch of sadness, and firm relying confidence upon his son's good feelings, but which, in truth, did not succeed in expressing much except a great deal of irritation and heat; “Edward, I have come to speak with you upon last night's unfortunate business, and to give you, in a few words, my opinion upon the subject, in order that you may choose your part at once.”

Edward de Vaux, who knew his father well, — though he knew not all his motives in the

present instance,— prepared himself to resist; for he divined, almost immediately from the beginning of Lord Dewry's discourse, what would be the end; being well aware— though he did not choose to put it exactly in such terms to his own heart—that a certain combination of vanity, pride, selfishness, and remorselessness in the bosom of his worthy parent, made him the exact person to resent highly even a slight offence, and to treasure long hatred for a casual word. But Edward de Vaux knew also that he himself stood in a position towards his father different from that in which any other person stood: he knew that the ties of nature, long habit, and irreproachable conduct, rendered him the only real object of Lord Dewry's love—the only being who possessed any influence over a mind which never, through life, in any other case than his own, had yielded to either persuasion or opposition. He himself, however, had found, from experience, that he could resist with success, when the ground of resistance was such as satisfied his own heart; and he now, therefore, prepared to practise, upon an occasion of more importance, a behaviour he had sometimes displayed in regard to trifles. He was aware, at the same time, from his soldierly habits, that it

was advantageous sometimes to be the attacking party ; and when his father paused, a little out of breath with climbing the stairs faster than necessary, and with speaking more vehemently than was becoming, he instantly replied, “ Oh, my Lord, if you mean the business with Manners, do not think of it any more ! Manners is extremely good-humoured, and will forget it at once, I am sure. No farther apology is necessary.

“ Apology, Sir !” exclaimed Lord Dewry ; “ what do you mean ? I have made no apology !”

“ No, my Lord,” replied De Vaux ; “ but, considering that Manners was my friend ; that he saved my life at the risk of his own ; that he came down here at my invitation ; and that he was a guest in my aunt’s house ; I thought it necessary to apologise for the manner in which my father had treated him, saying, that I was sure you were irritated by some other cause ; and adding — as I felt sure you would — that you would be sorry for having expressed yourself so bitterly, when you reflected upon the circumstances.”

“ You did, Sir !” said Lord Dewry, “ you did ! then I have only to tell you that you said what

was not the case;”—De Vaux reddened;—“that you took a great and unwarrantable liberty with my name,” continued Lord Dewry, whose passion had quite overcome every restraint; “and that had you considered your father as much as this new friend, you would have seen that *I* was the insulted person — that *I* had a right to demand apology, and you would have broken off all connection with a person who would show so little respect to your parent: and this, Sir,—this is what I command you now to do, or to take the consequences of your disobedience.”

“My Lord,” answered De Vaux, cooling himself down as far as possible,—“my Lord, as you must already have seen, we view the matter in a very different light. It grieves me bitterly that we should disagree so severely, on the very day after my return; but, if you wish me to break off my acquaintance with Colonel Manners, because you have thought fit to treat him with some rudeness, I must tell you, at once, such an idea could never be entertained by me for a moment. As to the consequences which your Lordship speaks of, I am at a loss to conceive what you mean. A disagreement with your Lordship is ——”

“The consequences, Captain de Vaux,” interrupted his father, with a small red spot glowing in the middle of his sallow cheek — “the consequences may be more bitter than you think. You believe that the estates of the barony, being entailed, must descend to you; but, let me tell you, young man — let me tell you,” he repeated, approaching nearer to his son, and lowering his voice in tone, but not in emphasis, — “let me tell you, you could be deprived of them by a word. But no more of that,” he added, raising his head, and resuming his usual air of dignity, which had been a good deal lost during that morning, “no more of that — the consequences to which I alluded, and to which I now allude, are the displeasure of your father, and the knowledge that you remain the friend of a man who has insulted him.”

“Could I see, my dear Sir,” replied De Vaux, “that Manners had insulted you ——”

“It is sufficient, Sir, that I see it,” interrupted his father, hastily, “it is sufficient that I see it; and I hold myself aggrieved, that my son should see it otherwise. But do as you will, Edward de Vaux — do as you will. If

you are lost to a sense of filial duty, and refuse to obey my positive injunction to break with this man, you may act as you think fit."

"I shall never, my Lord, even dream of breaking with him," replied De Vaux; "as it appears to me, that to do so would render me an accomplice in an act of notable injustice."

"You are dutiful, Sir — you are respectful," said Lord Dewry, setting his teeth hard; "but do as you please — do as you please: I wish you good morning," and, turning on his heel, he quitted the apartment.

"This is mighty disagreeable," thought De Vaux, as he rang the bell to bring back his servant; "this is mighty disagreeable, and mighty absurd it seems to me; but the worst part of all will be the meeting at breakfast. However, all these things must be encountered as they come, in this good pleasant world of ours;" and he returned to his toilet.

In the meantime the noble Lord, his father, proceeded to his own apartments, laid his hand upon the bell, and rang in such a manner as to show that he was in a passion, not only to his own servant, but to the whole house. His own servant, however, a thin, dark, saturnine person, well calculated by constitutional fri-

gidity, to cope with an irritable master, was not in the least alarmed by any sign of his Lord's angry mood, to which he was wont to oppose, on all occasions, a dull, obtuse silence, that left him without any remedy but patience. He accordingly proceeded slowly to Lord Dewry's apartment; received the objurgation for his tardiness with profound and unmoved taciturnity; listened to his Lordship's orders to pack up all his dressing things, and order the horses to the carriage directly, in the same automatonical manner, and then went to take his breakfast, not at all approving of his master's purpose of setting out without refreshment. Lord Dewry, fondly fancying that he had gone to order the horses to be put to, waited in his bed-room, very patiently, for five minutes, then began to get angry during five minutes more, and then rang the bell for at least the same space of time. At the end of that period the man again made his appearance; and, with a face of dull unconsciousness, asked if his Lordship had rung, although he had heard every succeeding stroke of the bell.

Lord Dewry stamped with rage; but, finding that it had no effect, he left the man alone to arrange his dressing things, while, for the pur-

pose of waiting till the carriage was ready, he went down to the library, calculating, of course, upon its being, as usual, the most solitary room in the whole house. If he expected to find it empty, however, he was mistaken; for Mrs. Falkland was seated at the table, writing a note; and, as there was no person, in or out of his own family, for whom his Lordship entertained so great a respect — which would have been a little, perhaps, approaching to fear, if he could have feared any thing — there was no one consequently whom he less wished to meet, at a moment when he was acting in a manner which needed the full excitement of passion and pride to appear, even in his own opinion, either dignified or gentlemanly. He was drawing back, but Mrs. Falkland raised her eyes; and his Lordship, conscious that he had been wishing to retreat, advanced, of course, with a greater degree of boldness, and asked, whether he interrupted her by his presence.

“Not in the least — not in the least,” replied Mrs. Falkland; “but you seem prepared for travelling, my Lord. You are not thinking of setting out before breakfast?”

“Most assuredly I shall, Maria,” replied the peer. “You do not suppose that I am going

to subject myself to the pain of meeting again, in your house, a person by whom I have been so grossly insulted, as this Colonel Manners?"

"Whom you have so grossly insulted, I suppose, your Lordship means," replied Mrs. Falkland. "My Lord, I am your sister, and consequently am not disposed to see faults; but I tell you sincerely, that you equally owe an apology to me and to Colonel Manners, for your behaviour last night. The one to myself, I will, of course, dispense with; but, if you do right, you will go to Colonel Manners, and tell him, that something had occurred in the course of yesterday to irritate and vex you, and that you are extremely sorry that your irritation vented itself upon him." Mrs. Falkland spoke with infinite calmness; and, when she had done, wrote another sentence of her note, leaving her brother the while to pause on the somewhat bitter matter of her discourse.

His Lordship employed the time in remembering that it was a lady and his sister to whom he was opposed, and in subduing the wrath of his heart into the quieter form of sneer; although he still continued to gaze on her, while she wrote, with eyes in which his anger still

maintained its ground, like a solitary post left behind a retreating army.

“Do you know, Mrs. Falkland,” he replied, with a curling lip, “in such pleasant little discussions as these, we gentlemen have hardly fair play when opposed to female antagonists; for, under shelter of your sex, you women dare say things to us, that it would be ungentlemanly to retort, and which are very difficult to bear.”

“Truth, my Lord, I am afraid, is often difficult to bear,” replied Mrs. Falkland, “and perhaps, on such occasions, you may hear it in a more unqualified manner from a woman than from one of your own sex.”

“As the matter is a difference of opinion, Maria, between you and me,” said Lord Dewry, “it is rather like begging the question, to assume that it is truth that gives me offence. You have forgot your logic, my good sister.”

“If I ever possessed any, my Lord,” rejoined Mrs. Falkland, “I certainly should not be disposed to try it upon you, in order to induce you either to make an apology, which is alike due to yourself and to Colonel Manners — or to stay here without making it.”

“I understand you, my dear sister, I understand you!” exclaimed Lord Dewry; “but

do not be in a hurry. My carriage is ordered, and cannot be many minutes ere it delivers you from my presence. In the meantime I will not interrupt you farther.— Good morning, Mrs. Falkland !”

“ Good morning !” she replied, and her brother walked towards the door. As he laid his hand upon the lock, he turned for a single glance at his sister ; but Mrs. Falkland was writing on, with a rapid and easy pen, in the clear and running movements of which there was evidently not the slightest impediment from one extraneous thought in reference to the conversation which had just passed between them. Anger, hatred, malice, even active scorn itself, man can bear or retort ; but utter indifference is more galling still. So Lord Dewry found it ; and throwing open the door, with a degree of force that made sundry of the smaller articles of furniture dance about the room, he issued forth in search of his carriage, with wounded pride and diminished self-importance.

Gliding gracefully down the corridor towards the breakfast-room was, at that very moment, Marian de Vaux, his niece ; and the sight of her beautiful face and form, with its calm and easy movements, was well calculated to tran-

quillise and soothe. But Lord Dewry had never been famous for being easily soothed. Dr. Johnson is said to have liked a "good hater," and had he carried the predilection a little farther, the peer was just the man to merit that sort of approbation. He was not only a good hater, but he was, and always had been, the man of all others to nourish his anger, and render it both stout and permanent. Now, during the early part of the preceding evening, before he found "mettle more attractive" in his quarrel with Colonel Manners, the noble Lord had—as he always did—paid very great attention to Marian De Vaux. He had sat by her, he had talked to her, he had exerted himself to be agreeable to her, when it was very evident that he was not much disposed to be agreeable to any one. But now, as Marian approached, gave her hand, and wished him good morning, he let her hand drop as soon as he had taken it, and answered her salutation by telling her he was in haste.

Somewhat surprised at the cloud upon her uncle's brow, his flashing eye, and abrupt manner, Marian drew back, in order to let him pass; and Lord Dewry took two steps more along the passage. Then recollecting himself, how-

ever, and remembering how strange his conduct might appear, he turned, and made the whole seem stranger than ever, as all people do, when, with a heart very full of feelings, which they are afraid or ashamed to picture in their nakedness, they attempt to explain the strange behaviour to which those feelings have prompted them.

“ I am obliged to quit the house, Marian,” he said, in a quick and agitated manner; “ disagreeable occurrences have taken place, which compel me, in justice to myself, to withdraw: the whole business is an unfortunate one, and I am afraid it may be some time before we meet again,—but I will write,—I will write, and explain myself fully. Good bye! I hear the carriage;” and with a rapid step he walked on, leaving Marian De Vaux not a little confounded by all that had passed, and entirely misconstruing the few abrupt and unsatisfactory sentences which her uncle had pronounced.

She heard his step sound along the passage, down the stairs, and through the hall, listened to his voice giving some directions to his servant, and then to the closing of the carriage door, and the grating roll of the wheels over the gravel before the house. Then mentally

exclaiming, " This is all very strange, and very unfortunate!" she went on towards the breakfast-room, into which a servant had just carried the urn, without closing the door behind him. The sound of her cousin Isadore's voice, speaking gaily with Colonel Manners, issued forth as she approached; but Marian De Vaux was agitated and alarmed; and, feeling that she must have time to think over her uncle's words, and to compose her mind, ere she mingled with any society, she turned to the music-room, and had entered it before she was aware that any one was there.

CHAP. V.

IT was a beautiful idea of Plato, and not at all an unchristian idea, that the sins which people have committed during life—and which in this case were termed *manes*—had an existence after death, and were the instruments for punishing those who had committed them—the worm that dieth not, and the fire that cannot be quenched. But had Plato seen into the bosom of Lord Dewry, he would have perceived that his theory might be carried a little farther; and that the sins and passions do not wait till we are dead, in order to torment their authors; but punish them even in this world, not alone in their consequences, but by their very existence. After having laboured *manibus pedibusque* to render every member of his sister's household as uncomfortable as possible, the noble Lord sunk back in his carriage, with his frame exhausted and his whole heart on fire, with that flaming up of painful memories

and violent passions which the occurrences we have related had excited. Unfortunately, however, it happens in the wonderful arrangement of this our earthly dwelling-place, that here our evil qualities not only torment ourselves but others also; and the noble Lord might have consoled himself with the certainty, that he had for the time, at least, destroyed much tranquillity, and turned joy into bitterness.

Of all who suffered on the occasion, Marian de Vaux perhaps suffered most. Mrs. Falkland, for her part, had been very much offended, but she respected her brother too little, to permit his ill temper or rudeness to produce any lasting effect upon her. Edward de Vaux believed that his father's present mood would not be long ere it yielded to circumstances; and Colonel Manners, though of course considerably annoyed by what had taken place between Lord Dewry and himself, was not aware of what had passed afterwards; and consequently did not enter, as he would otherwise have done most feelingly, into the un comforts of Mrs. Falkland and his friend De Vaux. But with Marian the matter was different. She knew nothing of all the occurrences of the morning: she had seen her uncle retire on the

preceding night, apparently dropping his dispute with Colonel Manners ; and she never for a moment connected his extraordinary conduct of that day with the disagreement of the preceding evening.

In almost all cases of apprehension and uncertainty, the human mind has a natural tendency to connect the occurrence of the moment, whatever it may be, with the principal object of our wishes and our feelings at the time. It matters not whether the two things be as distinct and distant as the sun is from the moon ; association in an instant spins a thousand gossamer threads between them, forming a glistening sort of spider-like bridge, scarcely discernible to other people's eyes, but fully strong enough for fancy to run backwards and forwards upon for ever.

Thus then was it with poor Marian De Vaux. It had been settled that her marriage with her cousin was to take place on the day she became of age — that is to say, in about three weeks. Now, whether she was pleased with the arrangement or not, we do not at all intend to say ; but she had made up her mind to it completely ; and the first thing that Lord Dewry's broken sentences suggested to her mind was, that some

difficulty had occurred in regard to her union with Edward, and that his father had withdrawn the consent he had been before so willing to give.

When Lord Dewry left her, she was as pale as death; and though before she reached the breakfast-room the colour had come back into her cheek, yet all her former ideas were so completely scattered to the four winds of heaven, that she felt it would be absolutely necessary to think what her own conduct, under such circumstances, ought to be, before she met any of the party; and especially before she met her cousin Edward, as towards him, of course, the regulation of her behaviour was most important. She turned, then, as we have before said, to the music-room, and entering it ere she perceived that any one was in it, found herself there alone with no other than Edward de Vaux.

Whether he had gone there purposely or accidentally — from a habit which some people have, of returning to take a look at places where they have spent happy moments — or from a sort of presentiment that he might find Marian there, we have no means of judging; but on her part the meeting certainly was un-

expected, and being such, it would hardly be fair to look narrowly into her manner of receiving her lover's first salutation, which salutation was sufficiently warm.

As soon as she recollected herself, however, she turned at once to the subject of her thoughts. "But, Edward," she said, "this is a most unfortunate occurrence—in regard to your father, I mean."

"Most unfortunate indeed!" replied De Vaux, looking grave immediately.

"But tell me what it is all about, Edward?" rejoined his cousin. "I do not understand your father's conduct. Do explain it to me!"

"I do not understand it either, my dear Marian," answered De Vaux; "his conduct is quite inexplicable."

The tears would fain have run away over Marian de Vaux's cheeks; but she shut the gates in time, and only one straggler made its escape into the court of her eyes, unable to get farther. Her cousin did not see one half of what was going on in the fair tabernacle of her bosom; but he saw that she was much distressed, and endeavoured to soothe her with the same assurances wherewith he made his own mind easy in regard to his father's conduct.

“Nay, nay, dearest Marian!” he said, “do not distress yourself about this business, unfortunate as it is. The principal part of my father’s present heat in the affair will pass away, for a great share is mere passion. I cannot however flatter myself into believing that his dislike will ever entirely subside, because, as you know, he is not a man who changes easily in such matters; but all his violence and his threatenings will die away and end in nothing.”

Marian, who had now recovered from her first emotion, paused, and looked pensively upon the ground; but while her bosom seemed as calm as monumental marble, there was a sad struggle going on within. “Edward!” said she, at length, “we cannot tell what may be your father’s ultimate conduct; but indeed I think that while his present objection — or, as you call it, dislike — continues, we ought certainly to delay our marriage.”

“Good God, Marian!” exclaimed Edward de Vaux, in utter astonishment: “in the name of heaven, my beloved, what has my father’s dislike to Colonel Manners to do with our union?”

“His dislike to Colonel Manners!” said Marian, blushing a good deal as she began to

perceive her mistake, and comprehended at a glance that the clearing up of the matter might make an *exposé* of her inmost thoughts that for reasons of her own she did not desire. "His dislike to Colonel Manners! Oh, is that all? His words and conduct towards me just now, made me think that his dislike was to me, Edward, and to our union."

"And did the thought give you so much pain, Marian?" said De Vaux, somewhat anxiously.

But Marian De Vaux had by this time completely mastered her agitation, and she answered in her usual quiet sweet tone: "Of course it gave me great pain, Edward, to think that I had lost my uncle's regard, and great pain to think that the consequences might pain you. But tell me, was it really nothing more than his dispute with Colonel Manners, which made your father's conduct so very strange?"

"Nothing more, I can assure you," answered her lover; "but you know that my father, when he bursts forth into one of these fits of passion, is like Don Quixote at the puppet-show, and deals his blows to the right and left upon all things, whether they have offended him or not."

“ Hush, hush, Edward !” cried Marian, “ he is your father, remember.”

De Vaux coloured slightly, and indeed he had not got to the end of his speech ere he had found that he had better have left it unsaid ; for, notwithstanding his general fastidiousness, and a certain degree of bitter that mingled with his views of other people, he had too much taste to find any pleasure in pointing out the faults or follies of his near relations. He might feel them a little too sensitively, it is true ; but he seldom made them the subject of his conversation ; and he was now vexed, both that he had done so at all, and that Marian had been the person to whom he had done it.

Thus Edward de Vaux was a little out of humour with himself, and as a matter of course he soon found cause to be dissatisfied with others ; for the human mind — to which nothing is so burthensome as self-reproach of any kind — is always glad to cast a part of its load upon the shoulders of other people. The first thing, then, that upon reflecting rapidly over the moments just passed, Edward de Vaux found to be discontented with, was the manner in which Marian had spoken of delaying their union ; and once having started this idea, he

hunted it up and down through all the chambers and passages of his mind, like a boy after a mouse. "Their marriage seemed to her a matter of great indifference," he thought; and then he went on to persuade himself that her love for him was of a very calm and tranquil character compared with his for her. Indeed it seemed little more than indifference, he fancied; or at best *sisterly affection*; and at the very thought of such a thing as *sisterly affection*, the spirit of Edward de Vaux sprang up as if a serpent had crossed his path, although his person remained perfectly calm, with his arm resting on the harpsichord, and his fingers twisting some of the strings of the harp. One of the strings breaking, with a sharp twang, called the spirit suddenly back again; and he found himself standing abstractedly before his fair cousin; while she looked upon him with a smile, which seemed to say, "I could triumph, if I would! but it is not in my nature."

Now Edward de Vaux, though he read the smile and read it aright, which is not always done in that difficult language of which it was one of the hieroglyphics, was all the more puzzled when he had done. But the fact is, that

women's eyes, in matters of love, seem to be not eyes but microscopes; and Marian had traced the whole fine progress of Edward's thoughts and feelings, through every turning and winding, as accurately as if he had laid them all open before her with his own free will. Then, connecting the result with some foregone conclusions in her own mind, the combination produced a smile, being, as we before said, the equivalent sign, in the language mentioned, of the words, "I could triumph, if I would! but it is not in my nature." There was, however, a little mental reservation, perhaps, in regard to the triumph, inasmuch as she reserved unto herself entire right and privilege of triumphing hereafter, in case she should find it necessary and expedient to do so.

The time occupied in reading the smile, together with the beauty of the smile itself, and the exceeding loveliness of the lips on which it rested, all tended to get the better of the demon in the heart of De Vaux, and to make him feel, that as he loved her beyond anything on earth, he must try to content himself with obtaining her upon her own terms. Having come to this conclusion, it was natural enough

that he should seek to linger out the time with her alone; but Marian felt that if she did stay at that moment, she might be obliged to triumph in the way she wished not to do, or to explain her smile without triumphing at all, which was still more disagreeable. She therefore determined to retreat to the breakfast-room, in which she was sure of finding allies; and which — as her apprehensions in regard to Lord Dewry's disapprobation, and the consequent emotion, had now been dissipated — she was no longer afraid of entering.

De Vaux would fain have detained her, pleading that he had had no opportunity of conversing with her alone since his return, and urging all those little arguments which we leave to imagination. Marian, however, resisted with fortitude; and her lover, forced to content himself with a promise to take a long ramble with him after breakfast, as they had done in the days of their early youth, led her to the breakfast-room, where they found the rest of the party assembled, and conversing with as much ease and cheerfulness as if nothing had occurred to disturb the tranquillity of the morning.

“Well, Edward,” said Mrs. Falkland, “your father would not stay longer; and I forebore to

press him," she added, with a little pardonable hypocrisy, "as I know that he has a good deal of business on his hands; and when he is determined on any point, it is vain to try to move him." As she spoke, she looked for an instant towards Colonel Manners, to give more meaning to her words in her nephew's ears than the words themselves imported.

"I saw my father myself, my dear aunt," replied De Vaux: "he was with me in my room for half an hour, and explained the necessity of his departure."

Colonel Manners could have smiled; but he thought it best to follow the lead that had been given, and to appear ignorant of anything else having taken place, though, of course, he felt internally convinced that his unfortunate dispute with De Vaux's father had been the cause of that nobleman's sudden and abrupt departure. "I think your father mentioned last night," he said, in pursuance of this plan, "that he was going to Dimden, did he not, De Vaux? Does it belong to your family?"

"It always has done so," replied his friend: "it is here, very near — but a few miles off; but it is not kept up as I think it should be. My father always resides at the other house; and

seems to have so strong an aversion to Dimden, that, not contented with not living there, he lets it fall somewhat to decay."

"I must make you take me there some morning," answered Colonel Manners; "I have heard that it contains a fine collection of pictures."

"Fine, I believe, but small," answered De Vaux, delighted to fancy that his friend had totally forgotten the dispute of the night before, and was ignorant of any fresh discomfort which had been produced by that morning; "fine, I believe, but small—but I do not understand anything about pictures."

"Nay, nay, Edward, do not say that," exclaimed Miss Falkland. "Do you not love everything that is beautiful and fine in nature? have you not an eye to mark every shade and every line that is worth looking at in a landscape? and do you call that not understanding pictures? I have seen you and Marian find out a thousand beautiful little tints and touches, and lights and shades in a view, that I had generalised most vulgarly."

Colonel Manners and Mrs. Falkland smiled; and perhaps both might have said, had they spoken their thoughts, "It was because your

two cousins were in love, fair lady, and you were not!" They left the matter unexplained, however, contenting themselves with thinking that Isadore might, some time, learn the secret of finding out new beauties in a view; and De Vaux answered in his own style, "Still, Isadore, I know nothing about pictures, depend upon it. I cannot talk of *breadth*, and *handling*, and *chiar' oscuro*, and *juice*, and *ordonnance*."

"Except when you mean a park of artillery, De Vaux," said Colonel Manners; "but if I understand you rightly, you can see and feel the beauties of a picture as well as any one, though you cannot talk the jargon of a connoisseur about it."

"Perhaps that is what I do mean," answered his friend; "but I believe the truth is, Manners, that you and I are both far behind in the elegant charlatanism of dilettauteship. Why I have heard a man go on by the hour with the *copia fandi* of a Cicero about a picture, the beauties of which he no more understood than the frame in which it was placed. These men's minds are like a yard measure, a thing on which a multitude of figures are written down, without the slightest use till they are

properly applied by some one else. When I am seeing anything fine, heaven deliver me from the proximity of a walking dictionary of technical terms!"

"They are very useful things in their way, Edward," answered Isadore; "and only think, if these men can be so eloquent about things that they do not feel, solely upon the strength of their jargon, how much more eloquent you, who do feel them, would be, if you had the jargon too."

She spoke jestingly; but De Vaux, whose spleen had been somewhat excited, answered quickly, "I do not know, Isadore — I do not know. I very often think that a great acquaintance with the jargon of art tends to destroy the feeling for it. I have heard of a great critic, who on viewing the Apollo of Belvidere, declared that had the lip been a hair's breadth longer, the god would have been lost. This was all very connoisseurish and very true, no doubt; but, depend upon it, that man felt the beauties of the immortal statue a thousand times more, whose only exclamation on seeing it was, 'Good God!' I would rather have the fresh feelings of even ignorance itself than the tutored and mechanical taste that

measures the cheek-bones of a Venus, gauges the depth of colour in a Claude, or feels the edges of a book instead of looking into the inside."

"Yes, but consider, Edward," said Marian, who since she entered the room had been sitting silent at the breakfast-table, "it surely does not follow that because we understand a thing well, we lose our first and natural taste for it. If I could paint like Claude or Poussin, I surely should not take less pleasure in a beautiful landscape."

"No, Marian," exclaimed Miss Falkland, well knowing that De Vaux would not support his sarcasms very vigorously against his cousin, "no; but depend upon it, no one who could paint like Claude or Poussin would talk like a connoisseur."

"Perhaps," said Colonel Manners, "knowledge of all kinds may be like the fabled cup, whose influence entirely depended upon those who drank from it—to some it was death, to others immortal life; wisdom to some, and foolishness to others. And thus I should think a great acquaintance with any art, in some instances—where the taste was good and the mind was strong,—would refine the taste and give humility to the mind, by showing what an un-

fathomable mine of undiscovered things every study presents; while in other cases—where the taste was null and the mind weak—the result would be the vanity of ill-digested knowledge, and an idle gabble of unmeaning terms.”

“And how often would the latter be the case when compared with the former?” said De Vaux. “Answer me, my dear Colonel.”

“I am afraid, indeed, nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of the thousand,” replied Colonel Manners: “and what, I must confess, is worse still, the proportion of those who would bow to the vanity of ill-digested knowledge, and give implicit credit to the gabble of unmeaning terms, would be still greater; while taste and genius and mind would be forced to content themselves with the poor thousandth part of those whom they addressed.”

“Then how is it, Colonel Manners,” said Marian, “that we are told that what is really good has always ultimate success, notwithstanding this terrific array of folly against it?”

“Because truth is permanent in its very essence, and falsehood—of every kind, as well false taste as false statements—is evanescent,” replied Colonel Manners. “Such is, I suppose, the broad reason; but, to examine it more cu-

riously, we shall find the progress of the thing somewhat amusing; for even the ultimate establishment of truth and wisdom is, in a great measure, owing to the voice of the false and foolish. Here is a fine picture or a fine statue, of that chaste but not attractive kind, which ensures the admiration of those who can feel beauty, but does not win the attention of the crowd. A man without taste sees a man of taste gazing at it; hears him praise its beauties; and, as there is nothing so servile or so vain as folly, instantly affects to perceive the beauties which he never saw, and goes forth to trumpet them as things of his own discovery. Others come to see, and, as one fool will never be outdone by another, each sings its praises in the same vociferous tone, each gains his little stock of self-complacency from praising what others praise, and the reputation of the thing is established."

"Unless," said De Vaux, "one of the learned fools we were talking of should step in; and, as his vanity is always of the pugnacious kind,—the vanity that will lead, instead of being led,—he, of course, condemns what others have been praising; declares that the statue has no contour, that the picture wants breadth, force,

chiaroscuro. All the others cry out, that it is evident it does so; wonder they could have admired it, and poor patient merit is kicked back into the shade."

"But still, the same process takes place again," rejoined Colonel Manners. "The learned fool and his generation die off; but still, the merit of the thing remains, till some one again rescues it from oblivion, and its reputation is finally established."

"Indeed, now, Colonel Manners," said Mrs. Falkland, "I think that you have admitted Marian's maxim with too little limitation. That what is really good may always have ultimate success, is true, undoubtedly, when spoken of transcendent merit, or of superexcellent qualities; but this transcendent merit only appears once, perhaps, in a century; and the world shows that, in the great mass of worldly things, the every-day virtues, the every-day exertions, the every-day characters, which surround us in this busy existence, virtue and merit are not always ultimately successful. The religious, the political, the scientific charlatan often carries all before him; while the man of modest talent and unassuming virtue plods on his way unnoticed, and dies forgotten. So much, indeed, is this the

case, that do not we daily see that many a shrewd man of real talent feels obliged to mix a little charlatanism with his other qualities, for the sake of ensuring success? If Marian had said that things which are intrinsically immortal—which have in themselves inherent permanence—must have ultimate success when they are really good, and condemnation when they are bad, I would have granted it at once; but in all lesser things,—and the world is made up of them,—I sincerely believe that success depends upon accident or impudence.”

Colonel Manners smiled, and abandoned, or, at least, modified his theory, admitting that Mrs. Falkland was right: for he was one of those men who, having generally reason on their side, can be candid without fear. But there was also something more than this in his candour: it sprung from his heart—it was a part of his character; and though it may seem unnatural to the greater part of mankind, it is no less a fact that he was so great a lover of truth, that, when once he was convinced, he never dreamed of contending against his conviction. He therefore gave up the position, that merit would always be ultimately successful, limiting it according to Mrs. Falkland's showing.

Isadore added, that she thought it must be so, and would be sorry to believe it otherwise, as the occasional separation of virtue and success in this world afforded to her mind one of the strongest corroborative assurances of a future state. De Vaux laughed at her; and called her a little philosopher, and the conversation branched off to other things.

Breakfast is a meal at which one loves to linger. The daylight and the wide world have all, more or less, an idea of labour attached to them; and, though that labour be of the lightest kind, there is still a feeling in going forth after breakfast, that we are about to take our share of the original curse: which feeling inclines man naturally to linger over the tea and coffee, and saunter to the window, or look into the fire, or play with the knife and fork for a few minutes more than is positively required. What between one oral occupation or another, then, the party at Mrs. Falkland's breakfast table contrived to pass an hour very pleasantly. Colonel Manners, when all had risen, bestowed five minutes more upon the long window,—while Isadore and her mother, De Vaux and Marian, held separate councils on the future proceedings of the day,—and then retired to his own room, to write a

note of business to some of his people in London. He had not long been gone when the fat and venerable servant, whom we have called Peter, entered the room, bearing a note, which, with much respectful ceremony, he delivered over to the hands of Miss De Vaux. Marian turned a little red, and a little pale; and, had a jealous husband seen her receive that billet, he might have begun to suspect one whose every thought was pure; but the truth was, that poor Marian had instantly recollected her uncle's hand; and, as her last ideas in respect to him had not been very pleasant, she was afraid that the new ones about to be called up by his note might be still more disagreeable. Without pausing to examine the scrawl upon the back, which implied her name, she broke the seal and read. As she did so, a gentle smile, and a softer suffusion, stole over her face; but then she became more grave, then looked vexed, and then handed the paper to Mrs. Falkland, saying, "Do read it, my dear aunt—my uncle is both very kind and very unkind; but, indeed, it concerns you and Edward a great deal more than it does me."

Mrs. Falkland took the letter and read it, the substance of which was to the following effect:—

In the first place, the noble Lord began by expressing more affection for Marian De Vaux than he had ever been known to express for man, woman, or child before in his existence. He next went on to say, that there was nothing on earth which had ever given him so much pleasure as the prospect of his son's marriage with her on whom he had been showering such praises: it was the solacing idea of his old age, he said, and the compensating joy for many a past sorrow. He then declared that he had hoped to be much with Edward and Marian during the days that were to intervene ere their marriage could be celebrated, and to have witnessed the ceremony as the most joyful and satisfactory one that he could ever behold; and next came the real object and substance-matter of the whole, for he concluded by expressing his bitter disappointment at not being able to do so, from the circumstance of a man, who had so grossly insulted him as Colonel Manners had done, continuing in his sister's house, as her honoured guest, and his son's bosom friend. Marian would understand, he said, that it was impossible for him to present himself again at Morley House while Colonel Manners was there, without loss of dignity and honour; but he

nevertheless besought her to let every thing proceed as if he were present ; and he added a desire to see her, as soon after her marriage as possible.

While Mrs. Falkland, and then Edward de Vaux, read the letter in turn, Marian kept her eyes fixed on the ground. The fact is, however, that there was much in her uncle's letter to pain her, as well as to gratify her ; and she would even willingly have sacrificed the gratifying part, if, by so doing, she could have done away the painful. It was very unpleasant, in the first place, to be pressed, by assurances of affection and kindness, to commit a gross injustice, for the gratification of the person expressing that affection ; and it was not a little disagreeable to think of her marriage to Lord Dewry's son taking place without his father's presence and countenance. Women of the finest minds and the justest feelings will think of *what the world will say* ; and God forbid they ever should not. Marian De Vaux, therefore, thought of what the world would say, in regard to Lord Dewry being absent from her wedding ; and she could not help feeling that the comments of all her kind acquaintances would be painful, both to her pride and her delicacy. All this

was passing in her mind, while her eyes were busy with a pair of nondescripts on the damask table-cloth: but let it be clearly understood, that she never did Colonel Manners the wrong to wish that he should go, on account of any pain that she herself might suffer. She wished, indeed, that her uncle would be more just, more placable, more generous; but she felt clearly where the fault lay, and she never turned her eyes in the other direction. Mrs. Falkland appreciated Marian's feelings in almost all cases; but at present she estimated to the full all that would be distressing to her niece in the conduct of her brother, and thought, perhaps, that Marian might be more affected by it than she really was. "My dear Marian," she said, "this is very disagreeable for us all, and must be very painful to you, my sweet girl, in particular. Nevertheless, we must do justice to ourselves. Were it any thing like a sacrifice of mere pleasure, we might and would willingly do a great deal to satisfy your uncle, and remove the unpleasant load he casts upon us; but this is a matter of right and wrong, in which he is decidedly in the wrong; and to yield to him would not only be dishonourable to ourselves, but seems to me quite impossible. The demeanour of Colonel Manners to

me and mine has been every thing that I could desire, and is in every respect accordant with his well-established character, as a most gallant soldier and accomplished gentleman; and I can neither suffer the whims nor the ill-temper of any person, however near the relationship, to alter my conduct in such a case. What do you say, Edward?"

"I agree with you entirely, my dear aunt," he replied, "and so I told my father this morning. Holding Manners, as I do, to be most nobly in the right, I cannot suffer either my opinion of him, or my behaviour towards him, to be changed by the sudden dislike of even my parent."

"And let me say, Edward, a most capricious and Lord Dewry-ish dislike it is — though he be your father and my uncle," added Miss Falkland. "What can he find to dislike in Colonel Manners? He is not beautiful, it is true; but he saved your life at the risk of his own; he nursed you in sickness; he was your companion in danger, and your friend at all times; so that if any one loved him, it should be your father. Besides, could any one have made himself more agreeable than he has done since he has been here? What pretence does

Lord Dewry think mamma could have for turning such a man out of her house, when she had so lately invited him in the most pressing terms?"

"Oh, of course, that is quite out of the question," said Mrs. Falkland, smiling at her fair daughter's enthusiasm; "though I cannot help thinking, Edward, that your father's design, in that letter, was to make us do so, by rendering the contrary so disagreeable to us."

"If it were so, he will alter his behaviour," replied De Vaux, "when he finds that we cannot follow such a course; and I am sure you think with me, my dear aunt, that the only plan we can pursue is, to do as he bids us in his note, and proceed as if he were present."

"Most certainly," replied Mrs. Falkland: "do you not think so too, Marian?"

"Oh, yes, Marian does," cried Isadore Falkland, "I am sure she does?"

"I am afraid we must do so," answered Marian, smiling somewhat sadly; "but, at all events, my dear aunt, I had better write to my uncle, and I will try to persuade him to change his determination."

"Do so, my dear girl," replied her aunt; "though I am afraid you will find it in vain."

Marian sat down and wrote, and put as much gentle sweetness into her note as would have gone far to soften any other man upon earth. She said not a word in regard to Colonel Manners, his quarrel with her uncle, or her own feelings on the subject: but she expressed to Lord Dewry how deeply gratified she was by his tenderness and affection; how ardently she hoped to retain it when she should become the wife of his son. She then went on to tell him, in language that came rushing from her heart, how bitterly painful it would be to her, if he continued the same determination of not being present at her marriage; and she entreated, with persuasions that none but woman could have written, that he would yield his resolution in this respect. In the whole course of her letter — though it was as artless as any collection of words that ever was penned — there was not one syllable that could offend the pride, or the vanity, or the feelings of her uncle — not one that could afford anger or irritation the least footing to rest upon. Had it been calculated upon the most experienced view of all the follies and passions of human nature, it could not have been better constructed; and yet, as we have said, it was as artless a composition as

ever was penned: but the secret was, that it came from a fine, a gentle, and a sensitive mind.

And now, while she folds, seals, and addresses it, with neat and careful hand, and gives it to the servant to be sent off immediately, we shall take the liberty of turning to another part of the subject, and treating of the person whose presence was the point of difficulty.

CHAP. VI.

WHEN Lord Dewry quitted Colonel Manners, at the end of the flower-garden, as we have shown in a preceding chapter, the gallant soldier had turned back towards the house, but with steps much less rapid than those of the peer, from the simple fact of no violent passion moving in his breast. In truth, it would seem, after all, that man — notwithstanding his great pretensions, his reasonings about his own existence, and his conceit in his painted jacket — is not at all unlike one of those figures that children buy at fairs, with his arms and legs, and even his head, hung on by wires; and with the passions to pull the string at the back, not only without his volition, but often against his will. Wrath pulls, and he kicks; revenge pulls, and he strikes; jealousy pulls, and he writhes; fear pulls, and he runs; love pulls, and he dances; and, as no one of these passions was behind Colonel Manners at the time, he had walked on slowly and deliberately

towards the house, sometimes turning to look at the landscape, sometimes trifling with a flower, but doing neither one nor the other, perhaps, quite so often as when he set out that day upon his morning's walk.

Still it is not to be supposed that, though no very violent affection of the mind followed Lord Dewry's departure, Colonel Manners remained perfectly indifferent to what had occurred: on the contrary, it threw him into a fit of musing, if not of deep thought, and produced reflections which ended in resolutions, such as Colonel Manners might be expected to form. At the peer's wrath he laughed, and laughed at his menaces equally, secure in that calm, self-confident courage, which, not knowing what fear is, never dreams that it can be attributed to us: but at the uncomfot that his dispute with De Vaux's father might and would produce in the family he had come to visit, Colonel Manners did not laugh. He had assented, on the preceding night — in words which, with him, amounted to a promise — to forget the Baron's rudeness, and not to suffer it to abridge his stay; but, at present, new provocation had been given, and he had every reason to believe that his visit could not be prolonged to the

period he had at first proposed, without material uncomfot to the family at Morley House, however strongly their kindness or their politeness might urge his stay.

“Doubtless,” thought Colonel Manners,—for we must put his private cogitations into the form of that necessary folly, a soliloquy,—“Doubtless, the worthy peer will not go and expose himself so much to his own family, as to tell them what has occurred between us this morning; but equally, without doubt, he will contrive, by his demeanour towards me, to render the house not only very unpleasant to me, but also to all its occupants; and, therefore, as this is a field where honour is neither to be gained nor supported, I must even beat a retreat. Yet De Vaux will, I know, feel very much mortified, if he fancies that his father is the cause of my departure; and, therefore, I suppose that the best plan will be, to wait a day or two, and then, with the first letters that arrive,—and I must receive some soon,—to plead important business, and set out. I suppose I must bear with this ill-tempered old gentleman’s behaviour as best I may, for eight and forty hours, though I am afraid it will be a

struggle to avoid retorting a little of his bitterness upon himself."

Such had been the substance of Colonel Manners's thoughts upon this subject, as he walked back, and such the determination he formed; but as he did form them, there was something like a sigh escaped from his bosom. The reception he had met with from Mrs. Falkland and her family, on his first arrival, had been so warm and kind, that all the best feelings of his heart had been enlisted on their side. He had completely made up his mind to spend a happy three weeks with people who seemed, in every respect, so amiable; and although he felt that it might be a little dangerous, — by making him feel more acutely, from comparison, the want of domestic ties and comforts, — although he felt it might be a little dangerous, yet he had experienced a pleasure at the idea of thus dwelling, even for a short space, in the midst of a true old English family, that made him bitterly regret the necessity of foregoing what he had set his heart upon. As he thought of going forth again alone, it seemed as if it were the voice of fate that forbade him to expose himself to the sight of feelings and enjoyments that he was never to know

personally, and sent him back imperiously to the solitary state of existence which was to be his portion; and although Colonel Manners was accustomed to the contemplation, and had nerved his mind not only to bear the un comforts of his lot, but to resist every thought that would teach him to repine, yet there were times — and this was one — when he could not but feel the chill wind of solitude blow from the dreary prospect of the future, and blight even the enjoyment of the present. A dissertation on the moral and physical nature of man might be given to prove to a demonstration, that domestic ties are a necessity of his existence: and let any man gaze forward into future years, and fancy that some cold barrier is placed between him and domestic affection, that no kindred eye is to brighten at his presence, no affectionate lip smile at his happiness, no tear of sympathy to wash away one half of his griefs, no cheerful voice to dispel the thoughts of care, no assiduous hand to smooth the pillow of sickness, and close the eye of death, — let him picture his being solitary, his joys unshared, his sorrows undivided, his misfortunes unaided but by general compassion, his sickness tended

by the slow hand of mercenaries, and his eyes closed, while the light has scarce departed, by the rude touch of some weary and indifferent menial, — let him fancy all this, and then he will feel, indeed, that domestic ties are a necessity of our existence — at least, if he be not either drunk with licentious passions, or a mere calculating machine.

We do not mean to say that all these ideas, or any one of them, presented themselves to the mind of Colonel Manners. Far be it from us to insinuate that he was foolish enough to give a vivid form, and painful minuteness, to the evils of a state that he believed he could not avoid. He struggled even against the general impression; but, as we have said, there were moments in his life — and this was one — when, notwithstanding reason and resolution, he would feel bitterly, that it is sad and sorrowful to pass through life alone, to spend one's days in solitude, and to go down into the grave without a tie. The impression was so strongly raised, and clung so firmly to his mind, at the moment we speak of, that he took a turn of a hundred yards back upon the walk, to give the thoughts full range. Then remembering him-

self, he broke out into an involuntary exclamation of, "This is folly!" and turned quickly back to the house.

In the breakfast-room he found Miss Falkland alone, and was not sorry so to find her; for there was in her conversation a pleasant and good-humoured sparkling, a frank and fearless liveliness, which amused and interested him. Besides, Colonel Manners was by no means a man to object to the society of a very beautiful girl: on that score he was quite fearless; for he had so guarded his heart by rampart, and bastion, and half-moon, that he feared no attack, either by seige or storm. The thing that he feared was, the sight of a state of happiness, which he coveted, but did not hope for; and therefore, he could enjoy the gay conversation and pleasing presence of Isadore Falkland, without alloy, though he might apprehend that a lengthened stay, in the midst of a cheerful family circle, might deepen his regret at his own loneliness.

Now, although the house of Mrs. Falkland, like most other houses of its date, had a certain ramblingness of construction, midway between the gothic of Henry the Seventh's, and the anomalous architecture of the nineteenth century, yet the rooms were sufficiently proximate

to allow Colonel Manners to hear, every now and then, as the servant opened and shut the door of the breakfast-room, the voice of Lord Dewry, in tones more sharp than was becoming. Nor was he slack in attributing the acerbity of the sounds he heard to their right cause; so that, as we have before shown, when Mrs. Falkland and her nephew spoke of the departure of the noble Lord, as a thing that had taken place in the ordinary course of affairs, Manners had very nearly smiled.

However, having taken his determination in regard to his proceedings, and, seeing no better plan that he could pursue, he suffered the matter to pass quietly, well knowing that real delicacy never makes a noise. To say the truth, he was not at all sorry to find that Lord Dewry had taken his departure; for he had every inclination to make himself both comfortable and agreeable while he did stay, neither of which objects are very attainable in the same house with a man who wants to fight a duel with you. After breakfast, as Manners was too much of a general to leave any thing to chance, he retired to his own apartments, in order to write such letters to London as would ensure immediate replies of the kind that would

afford him a fair excuse for breaking through his engagement with De Vaux, without rendering the matter painful to his friend, by any direct reference to his father; and, when this was accomplished, he returned to the rest of the party, whom he found in the act of seeing the footman leave the room with Marian's note to her uncle.

“ We propose to take a walk, Manners,” said De Vaux, as he entered: “ I must show you the beauties of our county; and, I think, we will go upon the path which leads across the hill, and brings us through the wood to within a few hundred yards of the spot where we saw the gipsies. We call it Marian's walk, as she might always be found there when we were but little boys and girls.”

“ It might have been called Edward's walk, as well, then,” answered Isadore gaily; “ for, I am sure, she was never there, without you, Edward. At all events, if you did not go with her, you were not long before you found her.”

“ And can Miss de Vaux venture on so long a walk?” asked Colonel Manners, “ in the present day, when the extent of a lady's morning promenade is twice round the room and once round the garden — when shoemakers

stare, I am told, at the name of walking shoes, and declare that they never heard of such things?"

Marian smiled. "You are severe upon us, Colonel Manners," she said; "but this walk is not so far either — though it is a little steep."

"It seemed to me near six miles," replied Colonel Manners; "six miles, at least, from this spot to the place De Vaux mentions."

"Oh, that was because you came by the road," replied Isadore: "if you had come over the hill you would have shortened the way by one half — but I forgot; you would have met with some accident also, as it was dark, and you were on horseback. It is not much more than two miles to the place where the path again joins the high road, after passing through Morley wood."

"If you find it so short, I trust you are to be of the party, Miss Falkland," said Colonel Manners.

"Oh, most certainly," she replied. "It was all very well for Edward and Marian to wander through the woods together, when they were boys and girls; but now propriety, you know, Colonel Manners, requires a sedate and aged chaperon; and besides, I could not leave the

party of such an odd and unfortunate number as three : I should be afraid of some accident happening to you by the way."

" But three is a fortunate number, my gay cousin," replied De Vaux, smiling ; " not an unfortunate one, by every rule of cabalistic science."

" In figures, but not in love, Edward," answered his cousin, with a gay laugh. " At least, I have read as much in your face, more than once, when I happened to be the unfortunate third ——"

" Hush, hush, Isadore," cried Marian. " Come, let us dress ourselves to go ;" and, taking her cousin's arm, she hurried her away. Now, Marian de Vaux, who knew her cousin well, was quite sure that Isadore would not push her raillery of her lover one step too far ; but still she was not sorry to break off Isadore's discourse ; for love is one of those things that people may talk about a great deal, when they feel it not, but which they bury deep in the heart's innermost tabernacle as soon as they know its value, and, like misers, tremble even when their treasure is named.

Every one was soon ready to set out ; and, strolling through the garden separately, they

proceeded to what was called the little gate, which gave them exit upon the road of which they were in search. By separately, I mean that neither of the gentlemen offered an arm to their female companions, so long as they were within rows of box-wood bordering, and upon gravel walks. There would have been something ridiculous in it; although, perhaps, the quality of walking arm-in-arm is to be looked upon as one of the peculiar privileges of humanity, which as much distinguishes man from other animals, as any other quality of his mind or body. He has been called, by those who strove to define him, "a forked radish, fantastically cut," "a viviparous biped, without feathers," "a cooking animal," and many another name. But had they called him "the animal that walks arm-in-arm," philosophers might have come nearer to his distinctive quality; for not only is it a thing that no other animal does, but it also gives, at once, the idea of many of the finer qualities of man's mind, and is, in fact, a sort of living hieroglyphic of affection and sympathy, and mutual assistance and support.

Now Colonel Manners and Edward de Vaux, looking upon the privilege of walking arm-in-

arm in its true light, might consider it with too much reverence to enter upon it lightly, and therefore not offer to exercise it towards their fair companions, till the steepness of the way, and the openness of the country, seemed to render it necessary for their convenience and protection. There might, indeed, be another reason, which was, that in issuing forth from the house, a little derangement in the natural order of things had taken place, — some stray glove, or wandering stick, or something of the kind, had been forgotten, so as to throw out the order of the march ; and Colonel Manners found himself walking beside Marian de Vaux, while De Vaux was at the elbow of his cousin Isadore. Colonel Manners, in agreeing to go out upon this expedition, had perfectly well understood the part he was held to play ; and De Vaux had the most firm and implicit reliance upon his friend's tact in the business : so that by a tacit convention it was arranged between them, that the long ramble which Marian had promised to take with her lover was to be as completely solitary and agreeable, as if they had not a friend or relation upon the face of the earth. But the derangement which had taken place in the position of the forces of course rendered a counter

movement on the part of De Vaux and his friend necessary ; and yet, as the walk they followed was narrow, and did not admit of the advance of more than two abreast, the desired evolution could not be performed without rendering the object unpleasantly obvious, till some little accident came to their aid. Colonel Manners, however, had been out in the morning, as we have already seen, to reconnoitre the ground ; and as soon as he saw the difficulty, he instantly laid out the plan of the evolutions, and fixed upon the exact position, walking on still by the side of Marian de Vaux, and talking of *les mouches qui volent*.

But to proceed. Colonel Manners and Marian reached the little gate first, and unlocked it, and then Colonel Manners halted till Miss de Vaux and Miss Falkland had passed. The two ladies immediately halted on the bank of the little road, facing the gate, with Marian on the right hand and Isadore on the left. Colonel Manners then resigned the command of the gate to Edward de Vaux ; but, in marching out, while the other locked the door and brought the key, Manners took up a position upon the extreme left. De Vaux then advanced to the right of the line, and, wheeling

about, gave his arm to Marian ; Colonel Manners offered his to Miss Falkland, and led the way up the road to the left. This detail is given as an exemplification of Manners's military skill ; a quality which, unfortunately, we shall have no other opportunity of displaying throughout this book. Nor was Isadore Falkland's knowledge of stratagy less marked, in taking up the position to the left, as it entirely commanded the road up which they were about to proceed ; and as people in love in general walk a great deal slower than people not in love, it was necessary that she and Colonel Manners should lead the way, in order at once to give Edward and Marian de Vaux the protection of their presence and the benefit of their absence.

Colonel Manners and Miss Falkland did not lose much time in silence, for they were both people who could talk very pleasantly ; and, whatever they might think in regard to themselves, they each felt that it was so in regard to the other. They spoke of many things ; and Isadore's conversation, as she became better acquainted with her companion, and discovered that there were stores of feeling and kindness at his heart which would prevent him from laugh-

ing at her own enthusiasms, poured forth more of the deeper stream of her character, over which the rippling current of gay and sparkling jest that she usually displayed, flowed as much to conceal the depth, as for any other purpose. Besides, she was happy and young; and where was ever the stream, however profound, that did not sparkle when the sun shone full upon it?

Their first topic, as perhaps might be expected, was De Vaux and Marian; a topic which, under some circumstances, might have been dangerous; but Manners and Miss Falkland felt themselves perfectly secure. Still it was a delicate one: for however deep and true Colonel Manners's friendship might be for De Vaux, and however warm and enthusiastic might be the love of Isadore for her cousin Marian, there were, of course, a thousand little circumstances and feelings, upon which neither could enter, out of respect for the very friendship and affection which they felt for the two lovers. Nevertheless, perhaps this very *retenue*, with the sort of faint and misty allusions which they were obliged to make to their friends' love and their friends' hopes and prospects, and the graceful circumlocutions and explicative figures that it obliged them to seek,

were not without charms in themselves. Colonel Manners, for his part, felt very sure that, under Marian de Vaux's calm and tranquil manners were very deep and powerful feelings; but, at the same time, he wished — if consistently with delicacy it were possible — to find out from Miss Falkland whether his opinions were fully justified; and Isadore longed to know — with all a woman's yearnings to prove to her own heart the substantial existence of real, pure, permanent, unswerving love — whether her cousin had retained, during his long absence, all that tender, devoted, undivided attachment which he displayed towards Marian when present. Not at all did she wish to know whether Edward de Vaux had made love to, or flirted with, or talked sweet nonsense to any other woman. Do not let it be misunderstood; she never suspected such a thing, nor would have believed it had it been told her: but she would have given a great deal to find out, whether in the bosom of her cousin, the one thought of his affection had ever been paramount; whether the world, and ambition, and other scenes, and absence, and danger, and excitement had never banished the image of Marian from the bosom of Edward de Vaux; and, in short, she would have will-

ingly heard it proved, in his instance, that love can exist in the bosom of man, under prolonged absence and varying circumstances. In all this, she was as disinterested as a woman ever can be in regard to an affair of love; but, the truth is, no woman can be totally so. The whole of that bright race are, in this respect, but a joint-stock company — to borrow a figure from familiar things — and love is their capital, in which all have an interest, and all a share.

However, it will be easily conceived that, under these circumstances, the conversation between Miss Falkland and Colonel Manners was as nice, and delicate, and difficult an encounter of their wits as ever was practised. Colonel Manners was soon satisfied; for, in answer to some complimentary observation upon her cousin's manners and appearance, which went to praise their tranquillity as well as their elegance, Isadore answered frankly, and smiling as she did so, "Oh, Marian is often more *commoto dentro* than you think." Miss Falkland's researches, however, were less easily pursued, and they led her, like a child hunting a butterfly, through a world of flowers. One time, she would put her problem generally, and wonder

whether any man ever did feel, and continue to feel, as she wished to believe Edward had done towards Marian; and then she would put it particularly, and say, that she thought such an attachment as his must have been a wonderful solace and delight to him; an inexhaustible fund of sweet feelings and hopes, throughout all that he had been obliged to endure. But still Colonel Manners, who very clearly understood what she meant, hung back a little in his explanations; pleased, in truth, to watch the feelings that prompted her and the path she pursued; pleased with all the graces that the subject called up in her countenance and her manner; the beaming smile, the sparkling eye, and sometimes the sudden stop and passing blush, when she became uncertain of the next step and dared not advance.

After he had amused himself a little, and saw that she might misconstrue his backwardness into something disadvantageous to his friend, he caught at the next sentence, and replied, "Yes, indeed, I look upon De Vaux's attachment, and his engagement to your fair cousin, before he went to America, as one of the greatest blessings that could have happened to him; especially for a man whose heart was

calculated to make it his happiness and his safeguard, and his leading star wherever he went."

Isadore blushed warmly; and perhaps there was a little mingling of emotions in her blush; for, in the first place, the full confirmation of what she had wished and hoped, made her cheek glow; and, in the next place, Colonel Manners' words were so exactly a reply to the questions which had been lurking unspoken in her heart, that she almost suspected he had seen deeper into her thoughts than she had anticipated. A slight smile that followed upon his lip she considered as excessively malicious; but she was one who never suffered wrath to rankle in her bosom, but, in her way, revenged herself always on the spot. "You speak so feelingly, Colonel Manners," said she, just suffering a single ray of laughing light to gleam out of her fine dark eyes; "you speak so feelingly, that I doubt not you have been guarded and led in the same manner."

Let it be clearly kept in mind, that Isadore Falkland had only known Colonel Charles Manners fourteen hours and a half, or she would not have said what she did for the world. It may be thought that the case ought to have

been quite the contrary, and that she might have ventured more had she been more intimate. But such would be an erroneous view of the matter. Isadore Falkland well knew that fourteen hours and a half was not a sufficient space of time for any rational man either to feel or to affect love for the most enchanting being that ever the world beheld, and, consequently, that she might say a sportive thing in regard to Colonel Manners' heart, without any chance of a retort which might have been disagreeable — unless he had been a fool or a coxcomb, which she knew him not to be. Had she known him a fortnight, he might have made the retort, as a jest, which would have been disagreeable enough ; or as a compliment, which would have been still more disagreeable ; or as a serious fact, which would have been most disagreeable ; and therefore, under such circumstances, she would never have thought of talking about the heart of one of the company, when there were but two in it. Had she known, too, that the subject was a painful one to Colonel Manners, she would as little have thought of touching upon it ; and, indeed, a feeling that he was not handsome, and a vague misty sort of consciousness that that fact might have some-

thing to do with his remaining unmarried, did make her regret that she had said such words, almost as soon as they were beyond recall.

“ No, indeed,” said Colonel Manners, with a touch of melancholy in his manner that could not wholly be banished ; “ no, indeed, I have not been so fortunate as either to have guardian angel or leading star ;” and he smiled at the triteness of his own figures of speech, but with a smile that did not counteract, to the mind of Miss Falkland, the sadness of his tone. She was vexed with herself, and would have done any thing on earth, in a reasonable way, to efface whatever painful feelings she might have awakened : but though she was generally skilful enough in putting an end to a difficulty where others were concerned, she found it not so easy to disentangle the affair when she herself was the culprit.

Whether Colonel Manners perceived that Miss Falkland felt she had given pain, and was vexed with herself, or whether he likewise wished to get rid of the subject, matters little, but he now changed the topic somewhat abruptly, and looking round upon the woods, into the very heart of which they were plunging, he said, “ I wonder that you fair ladies are not

somewhat afraid of walking through these solitudes by yourselves."

"There is no danger," she replied; "we have none but very orderly peaceable people in our part of the world: though, in truth," she added, after a moment's thought, "we are the last family that should say there is no danger; but I have never heard of any very serious offence being committed in our neighbourhood, since the murder of my poor uncle, which, as it is long ago, of course I do not recollect."

"I remember having heard something of that event," replied Colonel Manners; "but do not recollect the particulars. Was he killed by highwaymen?"

"I believe so," answered Miss Falkland; "though I know too little about it to tell you exactly what happened. But—oh! yes—he was robbed and murdered, I remember; for it was proved that he had a large sum of money upon his person when he went out—several thousand pounds—and it was supposed that some one, who knew the fact, had either waylaid him, or had informed the murderers of the booty they might obtain."

"He was, I think, your uncle by the side of Mrs. Falkland," said Colonel Manners, who, of

course, felt an interest in the matter, in proportion to the little difficulties of obtaining information.

“ Yes, my mother’s brother,” replied Isadore ; “ Marian’s father. You may easily imagine that such a story rendered her an object of double interest to all her family — of redoubled tenderness, I believe I should say ; and even my uncle, who is not very scrupulous in regard to what he says to any one, is more kind and considerate towards Marian than towards any other human being. That great and horrible crime, however — I mean the murder — seems to have frightened others from our neighbourhood ; and, though we occasionally hear of a little poaching, the people round us are uniformly well-behaved and peaceable.”

“ Can you say as much for the gipsies, towards whose encampment, if I understood De Vaux right, we are bending our way ? ” asked Colonel Manners ; “ they are, in general, very troublesome and unquiet neighbours.”

“ I had not heard of their being here,” replied Miss Falkland : “ we are very seldom so honoured, I can assure you. I do not remember having seen gipsies here more than once ; and that was not in this wood, but on a large com-

mon, up yonder at the top of that hill, behind the house. — They are a strange race !”

“ They are, indeed,” answered her companion ; “ and De Vaux and I, as we passed their encampment, could not help marvelling that no government had ever thought it worth its while to pay some attention to them, either for the purpose of reclaiming them to civilised life, or, if that were judged impossible, for the purpose of obtaining those traces of knowledge which are waning from amongst them every day, but which some of their better men are said still to retain.”

“ Do you mean their astrological knowledge ?” asked Miss Falkland, with a look of no slight interest in the question.

“ Oh ! no,” answered Colonel Manners, with a smile ; “ I mean the knowledge of their real history, of their original country, of their former laws, of their language, in its purity, and of many facts of great interest, which, though with them they are merely traditionary, yet might be confirmed or invalidated by other testimony in our own possession.”

“ They are a strange people, indeed !” said Miss Falkland. “ Do you know, Colonel Manners, that the separate existence of these gipsies

and of the Jews — coming down, as it were, two distinct streams, amidst all the whirling confusion of an ocean of other nations — keeping their identity amongst wars, and battles, and changes, and the overturning of all things but themselves; retaining their habits and their thoughts, and their national character apart, in spite both of sudden and violent revolutions in society, and of the slow, but even more powerful, efforts of gradual improvement and civilisation; —do you know, whenever I think of this, it gives me a strange feeling of mysterious awe, that I cannot describe? It seems as if I saw more distinctly, than in the common course of things, the workings of the particular will of the Almighty; for I cannot understand how these facts can be accounted for by any of the common motives in existence; as, in both instances, interest, ambition, policy, and pleasure, with almost every inducement that could be enumerated, would have produced exactly the opposite result.”

“ I shall not attempt to reason against you, Miss Falkland,” replied Colonel Manners, with a smile, “ and indeed I very much agree with you in opinion, though perhaps not in your wonder; for being a complete believer in a spe-

cial providence, I only see the same hand in this, that I think is discernible throughout creation."

"But tell me, Colonel Manners," said Isadore, "have you any belief in the fortune-telling powers of the gipsies?"

"None whatever," answered Colonel Manners.

"Nor perhaps have I," said Isadore; "but at the same time, it is strange, that in all ages, and in all countries, as far as I can understand, these gipsies have pretended to this particular science, and have been very generally believed. At all events, it shows that they have an immemorial tradition of such a power having been possessed by their ancestors; and if it were possessed by their ancestors, why not by themselves?"

"But we have no reason to believe that it was possessed by their ancestors," replied Colonel Manners, "except, indeed, their own tradition, which, as you say, is evidently very ancient."

"Nay, nay, but I think we have other proofs," replied Isadore, "and very strong ones, it appears to me. It is evident from the historical part of the Bible that the most ancient Egyptians had various means of divination, and even

a magical influence, the reality and power of which is admitted by the sacred writers most distinctly; and consequently, when these facts are joined to an immemorial tradition of the descendants of the same nation, it seems that there is strong reason for believing that these powers existed even after the period to which the sacred volume refers."

"I am inclined, indeed, to believe," replied Colonel Manners, "that the gipsies are descendants from some Egyptian tribe, although the fact has been contested strongly, and the French call them Bohemians — unreasonably enough. In regard to the powers of divination attributed to the ancient Egyptians, too, I believe them to have existed, because I believe the Bible not only as an inspired record, but as the best authenticated history, without any exception, that exists; and at the same time I cannot suppose that men, who had so grand, so comprehensive, and also so philosophical an idea of the divinity, that four thousand years have not been able to produce the slightest enlargement of it, as displayed in many passages of Holy Writ — I cannot suppose that such men would have recorded as facts anything substantially inconsistent with the majesty of that Being whom they

alone knew in the age when they wrote. But you must remember that these powers, though permitted then, for reasons we know not, may have ceased now, like the powers of prophecy, and many other things of the same kind; and did the gipsies possess such powers at present, depend upon it we should find them clothed in purple in the closets of kings, instead of wandering upon bare heaths and stealing for a livelihood."

"You are right, I know," replied Miss Falkland, with a smile, at the lingerings of credulity that still haunted her own bosom, "and I have convinced myself, and been convinced by others over and over again, that it is all nonsense; and yet,——"

She paused, and Manners rejoined, "One of our old humorous poets says,

‘ A man convinced against his will,
Is of the same opinion still.’ ”

"And perhaps you think the verses still more applicable to a woman, Colonel Manners," replied Miss Falkland; "but that is not exactly the case with me. My weakness extends no farther than this:—were a gipsy to predict any great evil for my future life, it would make me very uneasy, however much I might struggle

against the impression; and on that account I would not have my fortune told, as they call it, for the world! Would you?"

"Without the slightest apprehension," answered Colonel Manners, laughing. "They may try their chiromancy on me, when they please, and do me all the harm they can for half-a-crown, which is, I believe, the stipulated sum."

"That is, because you are a man and a hero," replied Miss Falkland, in the same gay tone, "and you are bound by honour and profession to be afraid of nothing; but remember, I look upon it as an agreement — you are to have your fortune told this very day, and that will do for the whole party; for I will not have mine told, and I am sure Marian shall not, if I can prevent it."

"Oh, I will be the scape goat, with all my heart," he replied; "but I suppose we cannot be far from their encampment, if your computation of miles be correct."

"We are close to the high road," answered Miss Falkland; "but how far up the hill they are, you best know. However, let us wait for Edward and Marian. We must not make the babes in the wood of them; and of course they are a good way behind. Now, I dare say, while

you and Edward were in America, you heard of Marian De Vaux till you were tired — was it not so, Colonel Manners?”

“No, indeed,” he answered, smiling; “far from it, I can assure you. Although I long ago found out by various infallible signs that De Vaux was in love, yet never till circumstances had produced esteem and friendship, and friendship had become intimacy, did he ever mention his engagement, or the object of his attachment.”

“And then he doubtless painted her in very glowing colours,” added Isadore, trying strenuously to while away the time till her cousins came up, they having lingered behind farther than she had expected.

“Oh, of course, all lovers are like the old painter Arellius,” answered Colonel Manners, “and always paint the objects of their love as goddesses. But I will not gratify your malice, Miss Falkland; De Vaux has too fine a sense of the ridiculous ever to render himself so by exaggerating any feeling.”

“He has, indeed, too fine a sense of the ridiculous,” answered Isadore; “it is his worst fault, Colonel Manners; and I fear that, like all the rest of our faults, it may some day prove

his own bane; but here they come! Now, Colonel Manners, prepare to hear your fate. Edward, here is your friend going to have his fortune told."

"You mean going to give half-a-crown to a gipsy," said De Vaux; "but if you are serious, Manners, I will of course stand by you to the last, as if you were going to fight a duel, or any other unreasonable thing. Turn to the left and you will see the appointed place, as the newspapers call it, before you."

In this expectation, however, De Vaux was mistaken; for the gipsies and their accompaniments, men, women, and children, pots, kettles, and tents, had all disappeared. It must not be said, indeed, that they had left no vestige of their abode behind them, for half a dozen black spots burnt in the turf, and more than one pile of white wood ashes, attested the extent of their encampment; but nothing else was to be seen in the green wood, except the old oaks, and the yellow sunshine streaming through the rugged boughs, with a squirrel balancing itself on the branch of a fir, and two noisy jays screaming from tree to tree.

"This is a very Robin Hood like scene," said Colonel Manners, as he looked around, "and

less gloomy in the broad day-light than at eventide. But here are no gipsies, Miss Falkland, and I am afraid that you must put off hearing the future fate and fortunes of Charles Manners till another time."

"I am very much mortified, indeed," replied Isadore, "and I see that you only laugh at me, Colonel Manners, without sympathising in the least with disappointed curiosity; which,—as no one believes more fully than yourself,—is a very serious event in a woman's case. However, I shall hold you bound by your promise, and look upon you engaged as a man of honour to have your fortune told the very first time you meet with a party of gipsies,—nay, more, to let me know the result also."

She spoke with playful seriousness; and Colonel Manners replied, "With all my heart, Miss Falkland; and indeed you shall find that your commands are so lightly borne by me, that I will take other obligations upon myself, and even seek out your favourites, the gipsies; for these protegées of yours seldom move far at a time, unless indeed all the poultry in the neighbourhood happens to be exhausted."

"Oh, that is not the case here," answered Isadore, "there is plenty yet remaining in

every farm-yard, and I dare say you will find them on the common."

"I will go to-morrow, then, without fail," he answered, "for——" and he had nearly added words which would have betrayed his meditated departure, but he turned his speech another way; and all parties, well satisfied with their ramble, returned by the same path to the house.

Nothing occurred during the rest of the day to disturb the tranquillity of the party. The evening passed away in conversation, generally light enough, but of which we have given a specimen above, fully sufficient to show its nature and quality. Sometimes it touched, indeed, upon deeper feelings, without ever becoming grave; and sometimes it ventured farther into the realms of learning, without approaching pedantry. The annoyance of Lord Dewry's behaviour on the preceding night had at the time reconciled Colonel Manners in some degree to the idea of quitting a circle in which he found much to please and interest him; but no such annoyance interrupted the course of this evening, and he experienced more pain than he liked to acknowledge, when he thought of leaving behind him for ever a scene in which

the hours passed so pleasantly. He felt, however, that the annoyance might soon be renewed, or that even if it were not, he had no right by his presence to shut out De Vaux's father from Mrs. Falkland's house; and he resolved still to adhere to his purpose, and set out for London on the day after that which was just about to follow.

CHAP. VII.

THE ordinary and too well deserved lamentation over the fragility of human resolutions was not in general applicable to the determinations of Charles Manners, who was usually very rigid in his adherence to his purposes, whether they were of great or small importance. But it must not be supposed that this pertinacity, if it may so be called, in pursuit of designs he had already formed, proceeded from what the world calls obstinacy. Obstinacy may be defined the act of persisting in error; and the rectitude and precision of his judgment generally kept him from being in error at first, so that he had rarely a legitimate cause for breaking his resolution. Nor was he either of such a hard and tenacious nature as to resist all persuasion, and, like the cement of the Romans, only to grow the stiffer by the action of external things. Far from it; he was always very willing to sacrifice his purposes — where no moral sacrifice was implied — to the wishes and solicitations of those he loved or esteemed.

Nor is there any contradiction in this statement, though it may be enquired, how, then, did he break his resolutions less frequently than other people? The secret was this, and it is worth while to burden memory with it: he never formed his resolutions without thought, which saved at least one third from fracture; and though he broke them sometimes at the entreaty of others, he never sacrificed them to any whim of his own, which saved *very nearly* two thirds more; for we may depend upon it that the determinations which we abandon, either from a change of circumstances, or from the persuasions of our friends, form but a very minute fraction, when compared with those that we give up, either from original error or after caprice.

It has seemed necessary to give this lecture upon resolutions, because Colonel Manners very speedily found cause to abandon the determination which he formed so vigorously on the day we spoke of in the last chapter; and, that he might not be charged with inconsistency, it became requisite to enter into all those strict definitions and explanations that generally leave us as many loopholes for escape and evasion as a treaty of peace or a deed of settlement.

One resolution, however, and one promise, Colonel Manners certainly did keep, as soon as it was possible, which was, to enquire whether the gipsies were still in the neighbourhood, and to seek them out, with the full purpose of having his fortune told. Now, it may be supposed that here was a little weakness on the part of Colonel Manners — that he did give some credit to gipsy chiromancy; nay, the reader may even push his conjectures farther, and imagine him dreaming of Isadore Falkland's beautiful eyes and all their varieties of expression, from the deep and soft to the gayest sparkle that ever twinkled through two rows of long silky eyelashes. But the simple fact was, that he had promised to go, and that he went; and though he might think Miss Falkland extremely beautiful and extremely pleasing, — as every man who had been two minutes in her company must have thought, — he no more dreamed of the possibility of so fair a creature, courted and loved as he knew she must be, ever uniting herself to so ugly a man as himself — and as he sat and shaved himself that morning he thought himself uglier than ever — than Napoleon Buonaparte, in the plenitude of power, and the majesty of victory, thought

of a low grave beneath a willow on a rock in the Atlantic.

In regard to any belief in the gipsies' fortune-telling, there were little use of investigating closely, whether some thin fibre of the root of superstition had or had not been left in the bosom of Charles Manners. If any particle thereof did remain, it went no farther than to excite, perhaps, a slight degree of curiosity in regard to what the people would predict, more, perhaps, from feeling that it must be absurd, than from expecting any point of coincidence with his real fate: and certain it is that, whatever the gipsies might have told to Colonel Manners, he would have thought no more of, after the immediate moment, except as a matter for jest, than he would of any other kind of *sortes*, whether drawn from Virgil or Joe Miller.

It was just a quarter to six on the morning after that which had seen the walk in Morley Wood, when Manners, who was, as we have said, an early riser, gave some orders to his servant concerning his horses, and went out into the new wakened world. Having observed on the preceding day, for the purpose of carrying on the jest, the exact position of the hill on which Miss Falkland conjectured that the gip-

sies might have quartered themselves, he took his way across the park from that side which formed, in fact, the back of Morley House ; and, having assured himself before hand that he could find means of egress in that direction, he was soon beyond the walls, and winding up a small cart-road towards the summit.

The hill itself was somewhat singular in form ; and as it is rather characteristic of that particular county, we may as well endeavour to give the reader some idea of its appearance. It formed a portion of that steep range of upland, which we have before described as principally covered with fine wood ; but this particular point — projecting towards the river in the form of very nearly a right angle — seemed to have cast behind it the mass of forest which still continued over the ridge of the other hills. Vestiges of the wood, too, hung in broken patches on the flanks of even this protuberance, but the summit offered nothing but a bare, open plain, full of pits and ravines, and only farther diversified by a few stunted hawthorns, and one single group of tall beeches, gathered together upon a tumulus, which covered the bodies of some of those invading warriors to whom our island was once a prey. The ascent to this plain, from the

small gate in the park wall, by which Colonel Manners issued forth, was in length somewhat more than a mile; but it consisted of two distinct grades, or steps, the first of which was formed by a little peninsula, jutting out from the salient angle of the main hill, and completely surrounded by the river on all sides except the one which served to unite it, by a narrow neck, not above three hundred yards in breadth, to the high ground we have mentioned. This small peninsula, which was itself covered with wood, rose in a rocky bank to the height of about a hundred and fifty yards above the stream; and over the narrow isthmus was carried the road which passed the park; while the wall of the park itself, just excluding the wooded banks from the grounds of Morley House, was lowered in that part, so as to leave a full view of the picturesque little promontory from the windows of the mansion. Let the reader remember all this, for his memory may be taxed hereafter.

Branching off from the right of the high road lay the path up which Colonel Manners took his way, and which passed over a track upon the side of the hill, partly hedged in and cultivated, and partly left to its own ungrateful

sterility. It was steep also, but Manners was a good climber; and, knowing that Mrs. Falkland's breakfast hour was half-past nine, he did not linger by the way, but soon found himself at the summit of the hill, and on the piece of waste ground, which will be found in the county map under the name of Morley Common, or Morley Down. A good deal of dew had fallen in the night; and as the sun, who had not yet pursued his bright course far up the arch of heaven, poured the flood of his morning light upon the short blades of grass covering the common, the whole would have seemed crisp with hoarfrost, had not every here and there a tuft of longer leaves caught the rays more fully, and twinkled as if sprinkled with living diamonds, as the early air moved it gently in the beams. In different directions across the common might be seen a hundred small foot-roads, winding in that tortuous and unsteady manner which is sure to mark a path trodden out by man's unguided feet, and which offers no bad comment on his uncertain and roundabout way of arriving at his object; but, as the ground comprised many hundred acres, Colonel Manners might have been somewhat puzzled which way to take, had not his mili-

tary habits at once sent him to the small planted tumulus which we have mentioned, in order to obtain a general view of the place.

Climbing up the sides of the little mound therefore he gazed round him; but neither gipsies nor tents were visible; and he might have returned to Mrs. Falkland's, satisfied that they were not there, had not a small column of faint blue smoke, rising from behind some bushes, at the distance of about a quarter of a mile, marked the presence of human beings in that direction, and shown that the bushes, though apparently not higher than a man's hat, masked some fall in the ground where the fire was kindled. Thither, then, Manners turned his steps, and soon perceived that another old sand-pit, with some bushes climbing up one of the sides, had given shelter to those of whom he was now in search.

Before he could even discover so much, he became aware, by two low whistles, that his own approach had been perceived; and, as he was advancing directly towards the sand-pit, where a number of the gipsies had paused in their various occupations to watch him, he saw a man issue forth from one of the huts,

put something hastily into the bosom of his long wrapping coat, and then come forward to meet him. The gipsy, as he came nearer, gazed at him from head to foot, with a clear dark eye, which had in it nothing either of the dogged sullenness, or cunning stealthiness, that sometimes marks the male part of the race,—often the fruit both of their own vices and the world's harshness. There was something in the air and manner of the man that, to so accurate an observer as Manners, spoke a great difference between him and the general class of his people; but, to save a repetition of description, it may be as well to say at once, that the gipsy who now appeared was the same whom we have designated Pharold.

“ Good morning !” said Colonel Manners, as the other came near; “ you have hid your tents very completely here.”

“ Good morning !” replied the gipsy, slightly knitting his brow, as he saw the soldier's eye running over every part of their encampment with some degree of curiosity; “ Good morning! — it seems you were seeking me or mine.”

“ I was so,” replied Manners, still gazing with some interest upon the old sand-pit and its picturesque tenants, with their blazing fire

of sticks, and its white smoke curling through the broken ground, and amidst the scattered bushes.

“ And what did you want with us, then?” asked Pharold, somewhat impatiently: “ you wanted something, or you would not have come here.”

“ I wish to have my fortune told,” replied Manners with a smile, excited equally by the impatience of the gipsy’s tone, and by the nature of his own errand.

The gipsy looked at him steadily, and then shook his head. “ No, no, no,” said he; “ you did not come for that. Never tell me, that you would get out of your bed by daybreak, and climb a high hill, and seek a bare common, at this hour, to have your fortune told—never tell me that, Colonel Manners.”

Manners started at hearing his own name pronounced familiarly by the gipsy, though he knew the world, and all the tricks that accident and confederacy can put upon us, too well to suppose that he who is emphatically termed in Scripture “ the prince of the power of the air” had taken the trouble to send an account of his name and quality to a gipsy on a common. Still, as it was unexpected, he was surprised, and

expressed it ; but not in such a way as to make the gipsy believe more fully than he had done at first, that he really gave credit to the supernatural pretensions of his nation, and came there for the purpose of consulting them upon his destiny.

“ Pray, how did you become acquainted with my name ? ” demanded Colonel Manners calmly. “ I do not know that I ever saw you before ? ”

“ Perhaps not,” replied the gipsy ; “ but if you believe that I can tell you what you will become hereafter, why should you be surprised that I know what you are now ? ”

“ I never said that I would believe what you told me,” answered Manners ; “ but I know that, as I have been scarcely two days in this county, you must have been very expeditious in gaining my name. However, it is a matter of small consequence : I came, as I said, to have my fortune told according to your method. Will you do it ? ”

“ It shall be done,” said the gipsy, still gazing at him enquiringly. “ It shall be done, if you really desire it : but I know you men of the world, and I cannot help thinking you came not on that errand alone. I should think that Lord Dewry had sent you, did I not know that

he went away yesterday morning to Dimden, and then before mid-day back to the hall."

"You are a very singular person," said Colonel Manners, with a smile, "not only because you know every thing that is going on in the place, as well as a village gossip, but because you will not believe the truth when it is told you. Once more, then, my good friend, let me assure you, that nobody sent me; and that my sole purpose is to have my fortune told: nor should I stay here any longer, even for that purpose, had I not promised another person to submit to the infliction."

"So, so," said the gipsy; "so the fair lady you were walking with yesterday in Morley Wood is more wise, or, as you would call it, more credulous than you are. But do not look angry, gentleman. I will tell you your fortune presently, and will tell it truly, if you will do me a piece of service, of which I stand in need too — something that *I* have promised to do, though not for a lady with dark eyes; and you seem sent here on purpose to aid in it."

Now Manners was half amused and half angry; but it is probable the anger would have got the better of the other feeling, had not his curiosity been excited also by the language,

the manners, and the request of the gipsy, whose whole demeanour was something quite new to him. He replied, however, "I never undertake to do any thing without knowing the precise nature thereof; but if you will tell me what you desire, and I find it reasonable, I will not, of course, refuse."

"Yes, yes! you shall hear what it is," answered the gipsy; "nor will you find the request unreasonable. But come hither a little away from the people, for they need not know it." Thus speaking, he led the way towards the mound from which Manners had made his reconnoissance of the common; and, as he went, he kept his right hand in his bosom, but spoke not a word. At length, when they were fully out of ear-shot, Manners himself stopped, thinking that he had humoured his companion's caprices far enough.

"Now, my good fellow," he said, "nobody can either see or hear, unless they follow for the purpose. Pray what is it you wish me to do for you?"

"You are a dear friend of Mr. de Vaux, are you not?" said the gipsy abruptly, stopping and turning round as Manners spoke.

"As far as esteeming him highly, and de-

siring to serve him with all my heart, can make me so," answered Manners, now more particularly surprised, "I believe I may call myself his dear friend: but what if I be so?"

"If you be really a friend of Mr. Edward de Vaux," said the gipsy, "you will not object to take a letter to him."

"Why," answered Manners, "although I am not exactly either a private courier, or a postman, yet if your request stops there, I can have no objection to do as you desire; reserving to myself, of course, the right of telling him where I got the letter, and the circumstances that attended my receiving it."

"That you will do, if you please," replied the gipsy; "but the request does not stop there. There are conditions in regard to the delivery of the letter, which you must observe, and that punctually."

Manners smiled. "This is all very extraordinary," he said: "you speak in somewhat of a dictatorial tone, my good friend; and it is not easy for me to comprehend what business one of your class and nation can have with my friend De Vaux, so soon after his return from other lands."

"Trouble not yourself with that, Colonel

Manners," answered the gipsy ; and then added, seeing that something like a cloud was gathering on his auditor's brow, " if I have offended you, Sir, I am sorry : such was not my purpose ; and, believe me, I may know what is due both to you and myself better than you think. You are the commander of one of the King of England's regiments, and I am a poor gipsy ; but you come to make a request to me, for granting which — as every thing is barter or robbery in this world — for granting which I require something of you. So far we are as much equals as in the enjoyment of the free air, and yonder bright sunshine, and this piece of common ground. Whether there be any other difference between us, in point of higher or lower, God knows, and he alone. Thus, then, hear me patiently, while I tell you the conditions of my bargain ; and afterwards I will do your bidding concerning your future fortunes — whether you esteem my skill or not, being your business, and not mine, as you seek it without my offering it."

" I believe you are right," replied Colonel Manners, beginning more fully to appreciate the character of him with whom he spoke : " go on, and let me hear your conditions in regard to

the delivery of this letter, which is, I suppose, the object that you hold in your bosom."

"It is not a pistol," said the gipsy, producing the letter.

"I did not suppose that it was," replied Colonel Manners; "and had it been so, it would have been a matter of much indifference to me: but now for your conditions."

"They are few and simple," answered the gipsy; "I require, or request, you to give this into Mr. de Vaux's own hand, and to choose a moment when he is not only alone, but when he is likely to have an opportunity of reading it in private; and though you may tell him when and how you received it, and add what comments you like, you must not indulge in the same tattle to other people; but must keep silence on all concerning it."

"Your conditions are not very difficult," replied Colonel Manners; "I will undertake them. Give me the letter. Upon my honour," he added, seeing that Pharold hesitated, "I will do exactly as you have desired."

The man gave him the letter, which was cleaner, neater, and, as far as the address went, better written than the hands from which it came would have led one to anticipate. The

moment he had done so, Pharold uttered a long, loud whistle, which brought a little yellow urchin of ten years old to their side, as fast as a pair of bare feet could carry him. "Thou mayest go," said the gipsy; "and make haste." The boy set off like lightning on the road which led to the river, and the gipsy again turned to Colonel Manners. "Give me your hand, Sir," he said.

Colonel Manners did as he desired, smiling while he did so at a certain lurking feeling of the ridicule of his situation, which he could not repress. "If any of my old fellow-soldiers were to see me here," he thought, "taking counsel with a gipsy upon my future fate and prospects, they would certainly think Charles Manners mad." The gipsy, however, gazed seriously upon his hand, and then raised his eyes to the other's face, without the slightest expression in his own countenance which could raise a suspicion that he was seeking to play upon credulity.

"Colonel Manners," said Pharold, "before I tell you what I read here, listen to me for one moment. Most people who come to us on such an errand smile as they give us their hand; some because they believe us thoroughly,

and affect by a laugh to show they do not believe at all; while some, who really do not believe, smile out of vain conceit in their own superior strength of mind: but do you remember that this that we practise is, when properly practised, a science in which we have ourselves the most confident faith. We never enquire afterwards whether what we have predicted has proved true or not, for we are always sure that it must do so: but, at all events, such confidence in our own knowledge cannot spring from nothing."

Manners could have easily found a reply in favour of his own side of the question, but he did not think it worth while to argue logically upon chiromancy with a gipsy, although that gipsy might be somewhat superior to others of his tribe; and, therefore, without answering the arguments of Pharold, he remained in silence, while the other again turned a very steadfast glance upon his extended hand.

"Colonel Manners," said the gipsy at length, "if I read right, you have been a fortunate man."

"And, in some respects, an unfortunate one," rejoined his auditor, "though, in truth, I have no great reason to complain."

“Far more fortunate than unfortunate,” answered the gipsy. “Here are but three crosses in all your life as yet; two so near the beginning, that you could not have felt them; and one—a deep one—much more lately.”

Colonel Manners smiled. “In the past you are certainly not far wrong,” he answered; “but it is the future I wish to hear: what of it?”

“You mock us, Sir,” said the gipsy, eyeing him. “However, you shall hear your fate as it is. You shall be fortunate and unfortunate.”

“That is the common lot of human nature,” rejoined Colonel Manners.

“But herein does your fate differ from the common lot of human nature,” replied the gipsy: “you shall be no longer fortunate in those things wherein you have hitherto found success; for you shall do all that you think you will not do; and prosper where you neither hope nor strive.”

“That is certainly a strange fate,” answered Manners; “for I have ever found that success is a coy goddess, who needs all our efforts to obtain her smiles, and even then gives them but sparingly.”

“It *is* a strange fate, and yet, in some sense,

it is not," answered the gipsy: "your painters rightly represent Fortune as a woman, though they might as well have left her eyes unbandaged; for it is neither new nor marvellous to see woman fly from those that pursue her, and cast herself into the arms of those who care not for her smiles. And yet the fate written on that hand is strange, too; for it speaks of fortunes as fair without effort, for the future, as those of the past have been rendered by toil and exertion. It is a strange fate; but, nevertheless, it shall be yours: and now, forget not my words, but, when you find them verified, remember him that spoke them."

"But are you going to tell me no more?" demanded Colonel Manners: "I would fain have you come a little more to particulars, my good friend. One can make but little of these broad generalities."

"One can make nothing to laugh at," answered the gipsy, "and therefore I shall keep to them, though, perhaps, I could tell you more. Remember them, however, and, as you will soon find them true, lay them to your heart, Sir, and let them teach you to believe that a thing is not false because you do not understand it; that there may be truths without the range

either of your knowledge or of your faculties—some that you cannot comprehend, because they have not been explained to you; and some that, if they were explained to you a thousand times, your mind is too narrow to conceive—and yet they are.”

“ I wish, my good friend, that I could send you to converse with Voltaire,” said Colonel Manners.

“ Who is he ?” demanded Pharold; “ I do not know him.”

“ No,” replied Manners; “ I dare say not: but he is a famous wit, who dabbles in philosophy, and seems inclined to teach the world, by his example, if not by his precepts, that man should credit nothing that he cannot understand.”

“ And what should I do with him ?” demanded the gipsy, frowning: “ I think you are mocking me—is it not so ?”

“ No, on my honour,” replied Colonel Manners; “ I am not mocking you. On the contrary, I think you a very extraordinary person, and fitted for a different station from that in which I find you. Whether you yourself believe that which you have told me concerning my future fortune, or not, I thank you for hav-

ing gratified me ; and, at all events, I have derived from your conversation more than I shall remember long, than I anticipated when I came here. Will you accept of that ?”

Colonel Manners offered him one of those beautiful golden pieces which are now, I fear me, lost to the world for ever, and which were then called guineas. But the gipsy put it away. “ No,” he said ; “ you have undertaken to fulfil my request, and I have complied with yours. We owe each other nothing, then. Farewell !” and, turning on his heel, he left Colonel Manners to descend the hill, thinking him more extraordinary than ever, from the last very ungipsylike act, by which he had terminated their conversation.

The sun was now much higher than when Manners had trod that path before ; for, according to his usual custom, the gracious luminary seemed to have run more quickly at his first rising than he does after having climbed the steep hill of heaven ; and the wayfarer began to think that he might be late at Mrs. Falkland’s breakfast table, where cold eggs and lukewarm coffee were the just punishments of those who linger long abed. As he had closed the park gate, however, and had not the key, he was

obliged to go round and enter by the other side of the house ; but this proceeding, at all events, tended to solve one mystery connected with his late interview. In the hall, the first object he beheld was the little gipsy boy whom he had seen with Pharold on the hill ; and he now found him in conversation with Mrs. Falkland herself, who appeared to be asking after some of the Egyptian fraternity who were ill. Old Peter stood behind, keeping a wary eye upon the boy, whom he justly considered a very promising élève in no inferior school of petty larceny ; and as Colonel Manners approached, Mrs. Falkland terminated her enquiries, and made over her little companion to the care of the footman, with orders to give him something and send him away ; an order, the latter part of which was complied with in a more summary manner than she anticipated, as soon as her back was turned.

“ Good morning ! Colonel Manners,” she said, as they walked towards the breakfast room ; “ you find me with a curious little companion : but the fact is, that, while you were all out walking yesterday, a poor gipsy woman accidentally fell down from the high bank, close by the house, and was brought in here, completely

stunned. The village apothecary was away ; and, as I endeavour to enact my Lady Bountiful, I did what I could for the poor creature, who soon recovered. We had half a dozen of her tribe in the servants' hall, however ; and, much to the butler's and Peter's surprise,—and, I must confess, to my own also,—when they went away nothing was missing. According to a promise made by one of them, they have sent me down that little boy this morning, to tell me that the poor woman is now quite well. I wished to have despatched the apothecary to her, and offered to do so, as soon as he returned ; but they seemed to have an invincible repugnance to all the professors of the healing art."

"All people, I believe, who enjoy very good health," replied Colonel Manners, "feel the same towards the learned doctors—the very sight of one reminds us of losing one of the best blessings of heaven. However, the meeting with that little gipsy gentleman here explains something which I might have made a mystery of, had I not heard your account of your yesterday's interview ; for this morning I had a long conversation with a gipsy on the hill,—a very singular person,—who addressed

me at once by name, and seemed perfectly well acquainted with my being at your house."

"Oh, your servant was present yesterday," replied Mrs. Falkland, "and, with all the dexterity of an old soldier, gave us very great assistance in bringing the poor woman to herself. I remarked, too, that her gipsy companions did but little, and contented themselves with standing round, asking irrelevant questions of the servants, which of course, in that temple of tittle tattle, a servants' hall, they found somebody willing to answer; so that I dare say there was nothing supernatural in your name being known on the hill. But how came you, Colonel Manners," she added, with a smile, "how came you in such deep consultation with a gipsy, at this hour of the morning? You surely have not been having your fortune told?"

"I must plead guilty, I am afraid," replied Colonel Manners; "but if the fault be a very grievous one, I must lay the blame upon Miss Falkland, as it was under her special injunctions that I went."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Falkland; "and to answer what object?"

"Oh, if you mean Miss Falkland's object, I really cannot tell," he replied; "and my object

was certainly a very foolish one, but one that leads many a man to do a still more foolish thing: I mean, it was to prove that I was not afraid."

"And pray what was the result?" demanded Mrs. Falkland: but by this time they were at the breakfast room door, and Colonel Manners declared, that he would not communicate his fate to any one before he revealed it to Miss Falkland in general consistory. This he had soon an opportunity of doing; and the whole business was laughed at gaily enough. It is wonderful how light a little merriment soon makes every thing appear; and this is the reason why, in moments of mirth and cheerfulness, so many secrets are revealed that one would often give worlds to shut up again in the casket of one's own breast. Let wise diplomatists keep far from merriment; for a light laugh or a gay witticism, whose idle wings seemed hardly strong enough to flutter it across the table, has often taken a weighty secret on its back, and flown away with it, never to return. Now, the letter that the gipsy had given Colonel Manners for his friend he had believed might be of some importance, as long as he was alone; but every gay word that was spoken on the subject of

gipsies and fortune-telling took away something from its weight in his estimation; and had he been only restrained by a sense of its importance, he might have delivered the letter before breakfast was over, and made a jest of it. It has never been said that Colonel Manners was perfect; and though his mind was strong, it certainly was not without a full share of human weaknesses. Colonel Manners, however, was restrained by something besides a sense of the letter's importance—he had given his word to deliver it in a particular manner; and, whatever else he might do in the way of frailties, he never forgot a promise, though, in the present instance, it was long ere he found an opportunity of fulfilling the one he had made the gipsy on the hill.

CHAP. VIII.

ANY one who has tried to speak with another for five minutes in private, without the pomp and circumstance of demanding an interview, will know that it is almost impossible to find the opportunity, unless the person be one's own wife. There is always something comes in the way, just at the very moment—something unforeseen and unlikely; especially if one be very anxious upon the subject. If the matter be of no importance, the opportunity presents itself at every turn; but if one be very, very desirous to unburden a full heart, or tell a tale of love, or give a valuable hint, or plead the cause of oneself, or any one else, without the freezing influence of a formal conference, one may wait hours and days—nay weeks and months, sometimes—without finding five minutes open in the whole day.

As soon as breakfast was over, Edward de Vaux followed Marian into the music-room; and, when Marian left him, he came to tell his friend and Isadore, that they proposed making a

riding party to see something in the neighbourhood. Manners went up to his room to prepare ; and, as he found himself on the stairs alone with De Vaux, he had his hand in his pocket to produce the letter, when Miss Falkland's step sounded close by them, and her voice invited her cousin to come with her, and see a little present she had bought for Marian's birthday. As soon as Manners was equipped for riding, he went to De Vaux's room, calculating—as he usually dressed in half the time that his friend expended on such exertions—that he would find him there : but no one was in the apartment but a servant, who told him that Mr. de Vaux had gone down. As he passed along one of the corridors, he saw De Vaux sauntering across the lawn towards the gates of the stable yard ; but ere he could catch him, his friend was surrounded by grooms and servants, receiving his orders concerning the horses ; and as they turned again towards the house, Marian and Miss Falkland were standing in their riding dresses on the steps.

“ Well, I must wait,” thought Manners, reflecting sagely on the difficulties of executing punctually even so simple a commission as that which he had undertaken. “ Well, I must

wait till we go to dress for dinner: then I am sure to find my opportunity."

He was not destined, however, to remain burdened with his secret so long. The ride was pleasant, but did not extend far; and, on the return of the party, while Manners and De Vaux stood looking at their boots in the hall, Miss Falkland and her cousin retired to change their dress, and the opportunity was not lost.

"Now we are alone," said Manners, "let me execute a mission with which I am charged towards you, De Vaux, and which has teased me all the morning."

"Not a challenge, I hope," replied the other; "for it seems a solemn embassy."

"No, no, nothing of the kind," answered his friend; "but the fact is ——"

"Please, Sir," said Colonel Manners' servant, opening the glass doors, "I believe the young mare is throwing out a splint; and I did not like to ——"

"Well, well," said Manners, somewhat impatiently, "I will come and see her myself, presently — I am engaged just now." The man withdrew; and, resuming his discourse at the precise point where he had left off, Manners

continued, "the fact is, that gipsy, of whom I was speaking this morning, charged me with a letter to you, which I promised to deliver in private, and when you were likely to be able to read it without interruption."

"A gipsy!" said De Vaux, knitting his brows: "the circle of my acquaintance has extended itself farther than I thought, and in a class, also, equally beyond my wishes and anticipations: but are you sure there is no mistake; — does he really mean me?"

"There is the letter," replied Manners, with your titles, *nomen and cognomen*, as clearly superscribed as ever I saw them written: Captain, the Honourable Edward de Vaux, with many et cæteras."

"And in a good hand, and on tolerably clean paper," said De Vaux, taking the letter, and gazing on the back. "Why, this gipsy of yours must be a miracle, Manners."

"He is a very extraordinary person, certainly," answered his companion, "both in his ideas and his deportment, which are equally above his class."

"Nay, he must be a miracle — a complete miracle!" said De Vaux, laughing, "if he can

mend kettles, and write such an address as that, with the same good right hand. But this must be a begging letter."

"I think not," replied Manners. "It would not surprise me to find, that he knows more of you than you imagine: but, at all events, read the letter."

De Vaux turned the letter, looked at the seal, which offered a very good impression, though one with which he was not acquainted, and then, tearing open the paper, read the contents. The very first words made his eye strain eagerly upon the page; a few lines more rendered him deadly pale; and though, as he went on, his agitation did not increase, yet the intensity of his gaze upon the sheet before him was not at all diminished; and when he had concluded it, after staring vacantly in his companion's face for a moment, he again turned to the letter, and read it attentively over once more.

"I am afraid I have brought you evil tidings, De Vaux," said Colonel Manners, who had watched with some anxiety the changes upon the countenance of his friend: "if so, can I serve you? You know, Charles Manners; and I need

scarcely say, how much pleasure it will give me to do any thing for you."

"I must think, Manners — I must think," replied De Vaux: "these are strange tidings, indeed, and vouched boldly too; but I doubt whether I have a right to communicate them to any one but the person whom they affect next to myself. However, I must think ere I act at all. Forgive me for not making you a sharer of them; and excuse me now, for I am much agitated, and hardly well."

"Let me be no restraint upon you, De Vaux," answered his friend: "if I can serve you, tell me; if I can alleviate any thing you suffer, by sympathy, let me share in what you feel; but do not suppose, for a moment, that I even desire to hear any thing that it may be proper to keep to your own bosom. Leave me now, without ceremony: but take care how you act, De Vaux; for I see there is matter of much importance in your mind; and you are, sometimes, at least, in military affairs, a little hasty."

"I will be as cool and thoughtful as yourself, my friend," replied De Vaux; "but I am agitated, and the best place for me is my own room."

Thus saying, he left his friend, not a little surprised, indeed, that such a letter, from such a person, should have had the power to produce on the mind of a man like De Vaux the extreme agitation which he had just witnessed. De Vaux, he well knew, was not one to give credence to any thing lightly, or to yield to any slight feeling which a first impression might produce; but, in the present instance, it was evident that his friend had received a shock from some tidings, which had been totally unexpected; but which must have been probable, as well as unpleasant, to produce such an effect. The extraordinary fact, however, that news of such importance should be left to the transmission of such a man as the gipsy, — so separated by station, and state, and circumstances, from the person whom they concerned, — was, of course, a matter of much astonishment to Colonel Manners; and surprise divided his bosom with anxiety and sympathy for his friend.

It is a very disagreeable thing to have any two feelings, thus making a shuttlecock of our attention; or, when they are very eager, struggling for it with mutual pertinacity; but the only way to act, under such circumstances, is, to

treat them like two quarrelsome boys; and, shutting them up together, leave them to fight it out without interruption. Such was the plan which Colonel Manners now proposed to pursue; and, consequently, quitting the hall where his conversation with De Vaux had taken place, he walked straight to the library and opened the door.

What happened next was not without its importance; but, as the mind may be at this moment more anxious concerning De Vaux than concerning his companion, we will follow him up the staircase, as lightly as possible; enter his chamber; lay our hand upon his bosom; draw the curtain, and show the reader the scene within. But it may be as well first to look at that letter upon the table, before which he is sitting, with his left hand upon his brow, and his right partly covering the sheet of paper which had so disturbed him. If one can draw it gently out from underneath his fingers, while his eyes are shut, and his thoughts are busy, one may read what follows:—

“To Captain Edward de Vaux.”—Here, be it remarked, that there was a difference between the superscription and the address; the latter having borne, “To Captain the Honourable

Edward de Vaux ;" while in the inside was merely written, "To Captain Edward de Vaux."

The difference may appear insignificant ; but, in the present instance, and with the commentary of the epistle itself thereon, it signifies a great deal. However, the letter went on,—

"To Captain Edward de Vaux."

"SIR,

"I shall make no excuse for addressing you, as I am fully justified therein ; and you yourself, however great the pain I may inflict upon you, will, eventually, admit that I am so. You are about, I understand, to unite your fate to a young lady of rank and fortune ; and it is more than possible, that mutual affection, and mutual good feelings, would render your union happy. Nevertheless, believing you to be a man of honour, I feel sure that you would not like to lead any one into such an alliance with expectations which are not alone doubtful but fallacious. It is therefore necessary that you should know more precisely how you are situated ; and I hesitate not to inform you, that on the title and estates held by your father, you have no earthly right to calculate ; that, should you marry Miss de Vaux, you bring with you

nothing but your commission as a captain in the army ; and that whatever you expect from your parent will, most certainly, go to another person. Your first conclusion — as a world in which there are so many villains is naturally suspicious — will be, that this letter is written, either by some one who intends to set up some unjust claim to your rightful inheritance, by some disappointed suitor of your bride, or by some malevolent envier of another's happiness. Such, however, is not the fact. The person who writes this owes some gratitude to your family ; not so much for what was accomplished, as for what your grandfather sought to accomplish in his favour. You may have heard the story,— in which case you will give more credence to the present letter,— or you may not have heard the story : but still, the way to satisfy yourself is open before you. Either resolve to question your father boldly, concerning the points herein contained ; or, if you would have the facts proved, so that you cannot doubt them, come alone to the gipsies' tents, in the sand-pit, on Morley Down, this evening, or early to-morrow morning, and enquire for

“ PHAROLD.”

Now, under any ordinary circumstances, the only course which De Vaux would have pursued might have been, to twist up the paper into any strange and fanciful form that the whim of the moment suggested, and put it into the first fire he met with, giving it hardly a second thought. But there were circumstances totally distinct from, and independent of, the letter itself, which gave it a degree of importance far above that which it intrinsically possessed. Edward de Vaux, though he had a slight recollection of a dark-eyed, beautiful creature, whom in his infancy he had called *mother*, lost all remembrance of her at a particular period of his life, and had never since, that he knew of, heard her name mentioned. He passed, it is true, for Lord Dewry's legitimate son, was received as such in society, and admitted as such by his own family and relations. But, if so, how was it he had never seen a picture of his mother amongst those of his ancestors, and beside that of his father, which stood in the gallery, and represented him as a man of about thirty-five years of age?—How was it he had never heard his mother's jewels mentioned, though those of the two baronesses who had preceded her were often referred to?—How

was it that his aunt, Mrs. Falkland — as he inferred from many facts — had never seen his mother? — How was it that his father had never spoken her name in his hearing? All this had often struck him as something very extraordinary; and a thousand minor circumstances, which cannot be here recapitulated, had shown him that there was some mystery in regard to his family, which had frequently given him pain. Since his return, however, something more had occurred: two or three words had been spoken by his father, during their dispute concerning Colonel Manners, which had startled him at the time, with a suspicion which he had instantly banished; but which now came up again with fearful confirmation of the tidings he had just received. Lord Dewry had declared that he could be deprived of the entailed estates of the barony by a single word. At the time, that expression had but slightly alarmed him, for, well knowing the violence of his father's disposition, and the acts and words of almost insane vehemence to which any opposition would drive him, he had instantly concluded that it was a meaningless threat, spoken to punish him for the spirit of resistance he had displayed. But now it came back in its

full force ; and he asked himself, what could such words mean, if he were a legitimate child ? The estates were entailed on the male heir : he himself was the only male heir in the present line ; and if by birth he were the lawful son of Lord Dewry, no earthly power could deprive him of the lands of his forefathers. But his father, who had been educated for the bar before he succeeded to the title, had told him that a word would take them from him. A stranger now repeated the same tale, and pointed more directly to the same conclusion ; and all his former recollections changed his bitter doubts into a terrible certainty.

Edward de Vaux bent down his head upon his hands, and covered his eyes with a feeling of shame and degradation that was hardly supportable. It was not alone one well of bitterness that was opened upon him ; but, in whatever direction he turned his thoughts, new gall and wormwood was poured into his cup. If there had been aught on earth of which he had been proud — and, in that instance, his pride, though bridled and restrained by better feelings, had been great ; — if there had been any thing on earth of which he had been proud, it had been of his clear descent from thirteen

generations of noble ancestors. He had taken a delight, even from boyhood, in tracing the recorded history of each; and in proving that there had not been one, from the founder of the family to his own immediate parent, who had not been well deserving of the rank and station that they held in their native land. He had drawn from his noble birth the moral which noble birth should always afford; and had determined that he, too, would deserve the title that they had received, for great deeds — that he, too, would transmit the jewel of hereditary virtue to his children as an heirloom, unimpaired in passing through his hands. He knew that, in the words of a great natural poet, —

“ The rank is but the guinea’s stamp;
The man’s the gold for a’ that.”

and he felt that, to bear the name of noble, without being noble in his heart, was but to carry the die of value upon inferior metal, and pass upon society a base and worthless counterfeit. But all such thoughts, such remembrances, and aspirations, were now at an end. He could no longer look back to mighty men amidst his forefathers; for the world’s law cut the link

between him and them. He had no longer a proud name to keep up and adorn with noble actions, for he was an illegitimate son, who had unrightfully usurped the name and station which belonged not to him. His best support, his noblest designs, his most generous purposes, were cast down, and his heart was laid prostrate along with them.

But this was not all—he was now a beggar! the estates were entailed, and descended with the title; and though his father lived in somewhat gloomy retirement, yet the state with which he had surrounded his solitude De Vaux well knew could have left little accumulation from the revenues of his property. Here, then, were new evils to be encountered. Accustomed to luxury, and ease, and plenty, without one thought of that sordid ore, the want of which cramps so many a noble spirit, and stifles so many a great design, he had lived free from one of the greatest burdens upon man. He had never been lavish or extravagant, for such was not a part of his nature; but he had been generous and liberal to others, as well as at ease himself: and now he felt that every expense must be measured, and gauged by considerations of economy; that every guinea

must be weighed and estimated before it was parted with; that he must look upon money in a light that he had never done before; that he must make it a continual object of thought; that his mind, like the traveller in the land of the Lilliputians, must be painfully pinioned down on every side by the irritating ties of petty cares; that his ease must be at an end, and his generosity cease.

There was more, however, far more bitter kept mingling in the draught. Round the idea of one's mother the mind of man clings with fond affection. It is the first, sweet, deep thought stamped upon our infant hearts, when yet soft and capable of receiving the most profound impressions, and all the after-feelings of the world are more or less light in comparison. I do not know that even in our old age we do not look back to that feeling, as the sweetest we have known through life. Our passions and our wilfulness may lead us far from the object of our filial love — we learn even to pain her heart, to oppose her wishes, to violate her commands — we may become wild, headstrong, and angry at her counsels, or her opposition; but when death has stilled her monitory voice, and nothing but calm memory remains to re-

capitulate her virtues and good deeds, affection, like a flower beaten to the ground by a past storm, raises up her head and smiles amongst the tears. Round that idea, as we have said, the mind clings with fond affection; and even when the early period of our loss forces memory to be silent, fancy takes the place of remembrance, and twines the image of our dead parent with a garland of graces, and beauties, and virtues, which we doubt not that she possessed. Thus had it been with De Vaux: he could just call to mind a face that had appeared to him very beautiful, and a few kind and tender words from the lips of her he had called mother, but he had fancied her all that was good, and gentle, and virtuous; and now that he was forced to look upon her as a fallen being, as one who had not only forgotten virtue herself, but, in sin, had brought him into the world, to degradation and shame, what could be his feelings towards her?

Horrid! horrid is it to say! that the world should take unto itself that awful power, claimed by Almighty Omniscience, of visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, and of making the guiltless offspring more than share the punishment inflicted on the offending parent:

but so De Vaux felt that the world does, and that, in his instance, it was not alone the usual contemptible sneer, or still more contemptible neglect, that he was destined to meet; but that he must expect all the venomous pity and malignant compassion, which his fall, more than his situation, would excite, and which the hard and unfeeling beings of the earth affect to experience for those they wish most powerfully to depress.

Such accumulated feelings were all bitter enough; but there was one more bitter still, more filled with agony and degradation. De Vaux, as we have seen, was engaged to a being full of beauty, and grace, and gentleness, by promises which united them to each other, not alone as persons of high rank and fortune, having found a fitting alliance; but as two people who had known each other from infancy, had grown up in affection, and had for many a year looked forward to their marriage as the means of securing to both the utmost degree of human happiness for life — as the binding on of a talisman, that would shut out from their domestic hearth all the evil things of earth. With De Vaux, these feelings, these anticipations, were even stronger. He loved

Marian with the fullest, deepest, most passionate attachment. Towards her his heart was all fire and thrilling energy; and, though there were times when he somewhat doubted that her feelings were of as powerful a kind towards him, yet he believed that she loved him, as much as she could love; and, perhaps, even her slight reserve made him love her the more ardently. The day for their marriage was already fixed, the bridal ornaments were all prepared, their future life had, in the conversation of that very day, been laid out before them, as on a map; and Edward de Vaux had as much doubted, when he sprang from his horse, that Marian, in all her beauty, was to be his bride within three short weeks, as he doubted of his own existence.

Now, however, what were his feelings? — now that his situation was changed in every particular, — that in fortune, and in station, he had fallen at once from the situation in which she had promised him her hand; and when he felt that he had no right to claim from Marian de Vaux the execution of a promise which she had made under different circumstances, and to which he believed that all her friends would, of course, be opposed, as soon as his real position

became known? He felt that he had no right either to ask, or to expect it; and the darkest image that presented itself to his mind was, the loss of her he loved, for ever. Nor did this image come before him vague and undefined, as a thing of remote possibility, — though even then the apprehension would have been terrible enough, — but, in his present state of despondency, it appeared as an undoubted and inevitable certainty — as a thing that must and would take place. He felt as if Marian were *already* lost to him for ever, and the bright bubble of his happiness irreparably broken. He fancied, also, — he could not help imagining, that something like contempt would mingle in the pity that she felt for him. She was herself so pure, — delicacy, modesty, and virtue so characterised her every movement, and her every word, — that he tortured himself with believing that a part of the reprobation and scorn with which she must think of his mother, would fall upon himself. “She will look upon me as the child of vice,” he thought; “she will see in me the offspring of guilt and shame, and will easily make up her mind to the separation. She is always so reasonable, and so willing to do what she considers right, at any sacrifice, that her mind will soon

be tutored to forget Edward de Vaux. Were she of that warm, ardent, deep-feeling nature that casts fate and happiness upon one die, I might hope that she would still cling to me: but it is in vain thinking of it — I have no reason to hope it. She will follow the dictates of common sense and prudence, and abandon an alliance which all her friends would now oppose.”

Poor Marian! thus did her unhappy lover contrive to wring his own heart even with her very virtues. After thinking for at least an hour in gloomy silence, a faint hope crossed his mind, that he might have mistaken the import of the letter — that his apprehensions might have deceived him. Experience, gained from the consequences of our faults, almost always, sooner or later, gives us a vague, unsatisfactory consciousness, that such things exist in our bosom; and Edward de Vaux did know that he was given to torment himself needlessly. He therefore read the letter over again, and read it carefully; but, on doing so, his first impression was but the more confirmed.

“ Yet it might be false,” he thought; “ the whole tale might be false, or might refer to

something else, and be the mere blunder of some ignorant and presumptuous person." But then the remembrance of his father's words returned, and all that had before seemed strange regarding his mother came up before his mind; and he once more gave himself up to despair.

What was to be done, became the next question. There was just a sufficient portion of doubt mingled with his feelings to hold him tortured in suspense, without being enough to approach even the limit of hope. This state, of course, he could have borne no longer under any circumstances; but his situation in regard to Marian rendered it absolutely necessary that he should put an end to all doubt upon the business. And yet it was terrible, most terrible, to feel, that it must be his own hand which tore away the veil that concealed the obstacles to his marriage — that it must be his own hand that cast away his happiness for ever. The thought might cross his mind of letting things take their course — of choosing to disbelieve the letter — of treating it with contempt, and of proceeding with Marian to the altar, to secure the blessing of her hand, at least, before the rest was snatched from him.

But if it did cross his mind, it was but as the image of a thing that might be with some men, but could never be with him. It occupied not a moment's consideration — it left no trace behind it. To investigate the matter instantly, and to the bottom, became his determination; and, having done so, to make the result known to those interested, and at once place himself fearlessly in the situation which he had alone a right to fill. He did not forget that there might be circumstances in the story which he was about to hear which might render it necessary to conceal it from the public ear, in consideration for the feelings of his father, or of others. But to Marian, at least, the facts must be told: she was too deeply implicated in it all to be left in ignorance of what touched her whole future happiness; and De Vaux resolved that not only should she be told, but that no lips but his own should tell it, as he well knew how a few explicative words, or a well-turned round of phrases, may pervert a plain tale from its true meaning. "I will trust none," he thought; "and, whatever the truth may be, from my lips alone shall she first hear it."

The course to be pursued in his investigation became the next question. Two were pointed

out in the letter itself; but from the first, that of applying to his father, he shrank with irresistible repugnance. It was not alone that De Vaux, as is common — we might almost say universal — amongst men, possessed more physical than moral courage; that he feared the fierce and angry mood of his father, irritated as he had been by late opposition, and loved not to venture upon a discussion with him, which would rouse every dark and stormy passion into fiery activity; but he feared himself also: he feared that anguish and anger, and the haughty irritation with which he was sure to be encountered, might make him forget himself, and say words that no after-sorrow could recal. There might still be a doubt, too, upon even the very subject of his fears, and he felt that were those fears unfounded, his father might justly look upon it as little better than a gross personal insult, were he asked, if he had passed his illegitimate son upon the world as legitimate, and promoted his union with the heiress of a large fortune, under the pretence of his being heir to an honourable name and great possessions.

De Vaux might believe that such conduct was not impossible; he might also think that his father

was not actuated in so doing by the mean and sordid views which, at first sight, seem the only motives assignable for such behaviour. Various circumstances might have occurred, in earlier years, to make his father acknowledge an unreal marriage with his mother: considerations for her feelings, or for his own respectability, might be amongst the rest. Once having said so, and spoken of himself as of a legitimate child, Edward de Vaux knew well that his father's proud and reserved nature might have made him ever after silent upon the subject, till explanation became almost impossible: and the deceit he had practised or permitted might have been rather the result of haughty reserve than of cunning artifice.

De Vaux felt, however, that, ere he presumed to insinuate to his father a bare suspicion of his having committed such an act, he must have much better information and clearer proof to justify the charge. When such evidence was once obtained, he might communicate the discovery he had made to Lord Dewry by letter, and thus avoid that painful collision which a personal discussion of the matter must induce; or, if he found that the evidence was faulty or inconclusive; that there was motive for sus-

picion against the person who tendered it, or that the whole was an interested calumny, he might lay it before his father, as an affair which required him to investigate the assertions, and punish the authors of them.

The determination, therefore, was taken to visit the gipsy himself; and the only consideration that remained was, whether to go alone, or to ask Manners to accompany him. From the latter idea he shrank, as, in that case, he must have exposed to his friend doubts and apprehensions which were bitterly humiliating, and might even compromise the secrets of others, to whom his friend was a stranger, in a manner which he had no right to do. The letter, also, bade him come alone; and, on reading it over once more, every thing tended to make him give credence both to the sincerity of the writer and the accuracy of the facts. He had a faint remembrance, too, of having heard the name of Pharold mentioned by his aunt, as connected with the early days of her family; and the fact of the writer having referred him, in the first instance, to his own father, tended to show that there existed no design against himself personally. Besides, De Vaux was not a man to entertain fears of any kind for his own safety;

and, as he clearly saw that Manners was totally ignorant of the contents of the letter which he had brought him, he determined to go alone, and investigate the matter thoroughly.

His next question to his own heart was, “and, in the mean time, what shall be my conduct towards Marian? How shall I behave while I expect and believe that a few more hours will alter our situation towards each other for ever, and render that conduct wrong which was perfectly consistent with our engagement towards each other? If I change my manner, she may think my affection cooled, and feel herself unkindly treated. But then,” he thought again, bitterly enough, “but then that will but serve to smooth the way to the change which is ultimately to take place; and perhaps it had better be reached by some such intermediate step.” The next moment, again, his wavering thoughts turned to the other side, and he demanded whether he had any right to give her one instant’s pain more than necessary. The reply was ready: “No, no! that were cruel and unkind indeed; and should I do so, and my fears prove false, my behaviour would necessarily, from all the circumstances of the case, remain unexplained—a dark blot upon my

affection towards her. Yet, hereafter, if she should learn that such tidings have been in my possession, — that such doubts have been justly working in my mind, — will she not think it wrong, and even deceitful, of me to treat her as my promised bride, when I know that she never can be such ?”

What was to be done ? De Vaux, according to the old scholastic term, had got himself between the horns of a dilemma ; and we must pause for one moment, in order to enquire how far he was art and part in putting himself into that situation. It is wonderful, most wonderful, how people deceive themselves in this world, and how they go on arguing with themselves on both sides of the question for an hour together, affecting to be puzzled, and asking themselves what is to be done, when, from the very first, they have determined, in secret counsel, what to do ; and all this logic and disquisition has solely been for the purpose of bewildering *reason*, or *duty*, or *conscience*, or any other of those personified qualities of the soul, which the great parliament of man’s passions choose to look upon as *the public*, *the spectators*.

Now, at that point of De Vaux’s cogitations, wherein he thought, and rejected the idea, of

admitting Manners to his confidence in the matter before him, as is fully displayed three or four pages back, a fancy struck him, which instantly changed into a secret resolution, not to make Manners his confidant in the business, but to open his whole heart to Marian de Vaux ; and although it needed scarcely any argument to prove that she, whose fate was the most strictly bound up with his own, whose affection he certainly possessed, and whose good sense he never doubted, was the person, of all others, in whom he ought to confide ; yet some idle cant, that he had read in some foolish book, or heard from some foolish people, about the absurdity of trusting a woman ; some silly sneer or insignificant jest, magnified into a bugbear through the mist of memory, had power enough to make him hide his own determination from himself, and, in the first instance, go the roundabout path we have traced, in order to prove that he had no other resource but to tell her the whole affair, ere he boldly admitted his resolution even to his own heart, and brought forward the true and upright motives on which it was founded. So weak is human nature !

As soon as this was done, the matter was no longer difficult : all embarrassment in regard to

his conduct was removed, and he felt that what was kindest and what was most affectionate, was also the most just and the most reasonable. Whatever was the truth of the assertions contained in the letter he had received, and to whatever facts it alluded, it pointed principally at his union with Marian, and the disparity of fortune and rank which the writer affirmed to exist between them. She, therefore, was a person principally concerned; and on her ultimate decision their fate must rest. De Vaux feared not that any loss of fortune could affect Marian's regard: he could not have loved her had he supposed it would; but he did fear that the stigma, which he believed might rest upon his birth, and which he himself felt as so deeply humiliating, might make a difference in her feelings, and, when backed by the counsel and arguments of some of her maternal relations, might make her resolves unfavourable to his hopes. But still, in telling her all, from the beginning, in concealing nothing, in acting at once affectionately and candidly, he felt that he was establishing the best claim to continued affection and esteem: he felt, too, that, if there had been deceit on any part, such conduct would be the best proof to all that he was as

free as day from any participation in it, and that, whatever were the result, his honour and his name would be clear.

His determination, therefore, was backed by every motive ; but still it required great delicacy in executing it. It was necessary not to shock or to pain her, — he loved too much to do so, — and yet to be perfectly explicit. It was requisite to tell her all, and to leave her fully convinced of his unalterable love; yet perfectly free to form her own decision on her future conduct. The hour, too, and the manner, were matters for consideration, and he resolved not to delay, but let the communication be made immediately, and as a matter of importance. It would require time, however; and, as it was already late, he was obliged to make up his mind that the visit to the gipsy must take place on the following morning: he only paused, then, to recover his composure completely, and to think of the best method of telling Marian the whole, in such a manner as to give her the least pain, yet show his confidence and affection the most clearly.

He accordingly sat still, and laid it out like the plan of a battle: but in this he was very wrong; as, by so doing, he naturally presented

Marian to his fancy in the light of the enemy. The consequences were, that his own private little demon instantly saw his advantage, and, whispering in De Vaux's ear, made his irritable and irritated spirit believe that Marian would act in a thousand different ways, which he could not blame, yet did not like. The fiend, who well knows how to seize probabilities, took hold of every particular point in Marian's character which could give him any thing to cling to; and De Vaux saw, in the glass of fancy, her beautiful countenance looking upon him as calmly and as reasonably as ever, without a shade of agitation passing over its placid sweetness during the whole time that he, with difficulty, and hesitation, and agony of spirit, and humiliation of heart, was telling her all his anxieties and apprehensions. He saw, in the same magic glass, the very spot of the room where she would stand, and the fine easy line of her figure, all displaying perfect composure and graceful ease; and he heard the soft, sweet modulations of her voice, calm, gentle, but unaltered; and, at length, he thought, "I know perfectly what she will say when she hears it: she will declare that I am too hasty in my conclusions; that I must see the gipsy,

or whatever he may be, and hear the whole of what he has to say; for that the matter is too important to be judged of hastily, and that when we know the whole, and have had time to consider, we can decide: or she will speak of consulting my aunt, or her great uncle, Lord Westerham; or any other of those cold, disinterested people, who can give proper advice upon the subject: and yet I do my aunt injustice; for, though of a decided nature, she is not of a cold-hearted one.”

Thus, then, did he torment himself for some minutes, taking as much pains to make himself miserable, as if there were not quite enough pain in this world without our seeking it. Nor did he stop here, but went on in the same train till he had almost wrought himself out of the determination of telling Marian at all; though he ultimately came back to his first resolution. It is not to be concealed, that all this hesitation, and a great deal of this anguish, proceeded from his having fallen into the common error of giving the reins over to imagination, and believing that he had placed them safely in the hands of reason. Had he acted wisely, he would not have sat down to fancy any thing upon the subject at all, but he would have

risen up, on the contrary, as soon as his resolution was taken, and, seeking out her he loved, would have told her all his doubts and fears, without thinking at all previously either of what he would say, or what she would say. Nature, left alone to work her own way, in a thousand instances out of a thousand and one, does it gracefully; but if one calls in to counsel her, all the host of man's passions, prejudices, faults, and foibles — though judgment may be present too — yet, nine times out of ten, the multitude of counsellors, in this case, produces any thing but safety. Neither is there ever any use of long consideration in circumstances like those we have mentioned. What we will do always requires thought — how we will do it, seldom, if ever. Trust to your own heart, if you have a good one; and if it be bad, the sooner you hurry it through the business the better. It is equally vain thinking what we will say ourselves, for we are sure never to say it; and still more fruitless to fancy what other people will say, for we know nothing about it.

De Vaux, however, was, in some respects, a curious compound of very different principles. With all his errors, and with all his faults, he

had a great deal of candour ; and, however keen he might be in investigating and lashing the motives of other people, he was not half so strict an inquisitor into their failings as he was into his own. As a consequence of this, though the knowledge often lay dormant, he did know, as we have before hinted, with extraordinary accuracy, all the turnings and windings, the intricacies and the absurdities, of his own nature ; and, as soon as the rush of passions was over, his conscience—like the power of the law restored after a popular tumult—would mount the tribunal, and sit in judgment on his own heart. Often, too—like the same power exerting itself to repress anarchy—his better judgment would rise up against the crowd of wild images presented by an irritable fancy, and, after a short struggle, would regain its power.

Thus, in the present instance, he felt, after a while, that he was but anticipating more misery, when he had already sufficient to endure ; and, doing in the end what he ought to have done at first, he started up, and went to seek Marian, in order to give her the opportunity of letting her own conduct speak for itself.

CHAP. IX.

DE VAUX had calmed himself as much as he possibly could; and, as he was not blessed with a face possessing that general expression of jocund felicity which is usually denominated a smiling countenance, whatever degree of gravity and care was left in his look at present, excited no particular notice in the drawing-room, whither his steps were first directed. The party there assembled now consisted of Mrs. Falkland and her daughter, with Colonel Manners; and the latter alone saw that the agitation which he had beheld the gipsy's letter produce in his friend, had ended in permanent distress.

“Where is Marian,” said De Vaux, as he entered, not very much disappointed, perhaps, to find that she was not with the rest of the family, “where is Marian? do you know, Isadore?”

“I left her drawing in the little saloon at the other end of the house,” replied Isadore; “but that was a full hour ago, Edward; and if she expected a gay knight or wandering trou-

badour to come and sooth her, either with his *gaie science*, or his *bien dire*, she may have left her solitude by this time in disappointment."

De Vaux smiled somewhat bitterly, as he felt how much more painfully he had been employed than he would have been in the occupations to which Isadore referred; and, again leaving the drawing-room, he sped along the same passages which, with a light and bounding heart, he had often trod in search of her upon some joyous errand, whom he now sought with feelings of care, anxiety, and sorrow. Marian was still where her cousin Isadore had left her; and though, perhaps, she did think that De Vaux might have found her out sooner, when he had no ostensible motive for being absent from the side of her he loved; yet, like a wise girl, she received him with as sweet a smile as if no such slight reproach had ever crossed her fancy. The next moment she rejoiced that she had done so; for the expression of anguish in her lover's eyes did not escape her, and she felt at once that, for whatever other occupation De Vaux had yielded the pleasure of her society, it was for no agreeable one.

"Look at this drawing, Edward," she said, as he came in: "do you not think that I have

made my hermit look very melancholy sitting on that rock?"

"Not so melancholy as my thoughts, dear Marian," replied De Vaux, gazing over her shoulder, apparently at the drawing, but in truth hardly seeing a line that the paper contained; "not so melancholy as my thoughts."

"And what has occurred to make them so, Edward?" she asked, turning round to read the answer in his face, before his lips could reply. "Surely, I have a right to know, if any one has, what it is that makes you unhappy."

"You have, dear Marian, you have," he replied, "and I have sought you out here to make you share in all I feel, though the task be a painful one. But come here, and sit with me on the sofa by the window, and I will tell you all:" and, taking her by the hand, he led her on towards one of the windows that looked out over the park; for, however strange it may be, there are undoubtedly particular positions, and particular situations, in which one can tell a disagreeable story more easily than in others.

Marian was alarmed, and she was agitated, too, within; for she suffered not her agitation to appear upon the surface, when she could help it; and, as is very natural, she anxiously

strove to arrive at some leading fact as quick as possible. "Something must have occurred very lately, Edward," she said, "for you were very gay and cheerful during our ride this morning. Have you heard any thing from your father to distress you?"

"No, dearest girl," he answered, "I have heard nothing from him; but I have heard from some one else much that distresses me: but I had better show you what I have received, which will explain the matter more briefly than I could do."

So saying, he placed the gipsy's letter in her hand. Marian took it, and read it through; but, as she knew none of the circumstances which tended in the mind of De Vaux to corroborate the doubts insinuated by the letter, she viewed its contents in a different light; and, returning it with a smile, she asked, "And is that all that has made you uneasy, Edward? But it is evidently all nonsense, my dear cousin. If that foolish man, who teased me so much two years ago, were not out of the country, I should think it was a plan of his to annoy you; but depend upon it, that this is the trick of some one who wishes to disturb our happiness. What have we to do with gipsies,

Edward ; and how could gipsies know any thing about you and me, unless they were instructed by somebody else ? And if any person in our own rank had real information, they would of course bring it forward themselves, and not send it through a set of gipsies."

" You argue well, Marian," answered De Vaux, " and I would fain believe that you argue rightly ; but I am sorry to tell you that several things have previously occurred, which tend to confirm the assertions contained in this."

Marian turned a little pale from anxiety for him she loved. " Tell me all, Edward," she said, " tell me all ; I am sure you will conceal nothing from me."

" Nothing that I know, indeed, Marian," he answered : " I came with the purpose of opening my whole thoughts to you ; for you have every right, that either true love or our mutual situation can give you to know every thing that I know. Well, then, my beloved, the fact which most completely tends to corroborate the assertions in this letter, occurred in a conversation between myself and my father yesterday morning. It was when he was angry in regard to his unfortunate quarrel with Manners and my

opposition of the view he had taken: and he said sternly, and bitterly enough, that though the estates were entailed, I could be deprived of them by a word."

"Indeed!" said Marian thoughtfully, "indeed!" but the next moment she added, "No, no, Edward, it must have been said in a moment of passion, without reason, and without truth. Depend upon it, your father and my uncle would never have spoken about our marriage to me, and to all my mother's family, as he has often done, calling you somewhat particularly the heir of his titles and estates, if you were neither, as that letter says."

"But yet the letter and his words confirm each other," said De Vaux: "they both tell the same tale, dear Marian. Many a true word is spoken in a moment of passion, that a man has concealed for years, and would give worlds afterwards to recal. Besides, I think I have heard the name of this Pharold before: have you not heard my aunt speak of some gipsy boy that my grandfather wished to educate?"

"Oh, no, not my aunt," answered Marian. "All that happened when she was very young, quite a child, I believe. It was poor Mrs. Dickinson, the old housekeeper, who used to tell us

stories; about that gipsy when we were children; and his name *was* Pharold, I think. She spoke of him as of a fine creature, but very wild."

"You see, dear Marian," said De Vaux, with a gloomy smile, "every thing tends to the same result. My father's words confirm the story of the gipsy, and what we know of the gipsy would show that he had some acquaintance with the history of our family."

Marian mused: "It is very strange, Edward," she said at length, "and I suppose there must, indeed, be some foundation for all this. But yet I cannot understand it: if the estates are entailed, what is there on earth that can prevent your inheriting them? If the title goes to the sons, you must have it; and if it had gone to the daughters, I must have had it, you know, which would have been all the same thing. If you do believe this story, as I am afraid you do, tell me how it can be."

Edward de Vaux paused; for he had never calculated upon going farther, or being more explicit than he had been. He had thought it would be enough to explain that he was likely to lose the lands and honors of Dewry, and that Marian would naturally draw her own conclusion, and perceive the only cause which could

produce such a result. Her question, therefore, embarrassed him, for he would willingly have sealed his lips upon his mother's shame; and, though he had felt himself bound to tell her all he was likely to lose, without concealment, yet he hesitated at revealing the most painful part of his own suspicions, till those suspicions had been rendered certainties.

Marian saw him hesitate, and, raising her beautiful eyes to his face, she said, "Edward, you have promised to tell me all, and you must make it all you think, as well as all you know."

It was not to be resisted. "Well, beloved, well!" he said, "I will, though it is very, very terrible to do so; and, in truth, I hardly know how to do it. Marian, did you ever see my mother?"

"No, Edward, never that I know of," she replied: "why do you ask?"

"Did you ever hear my aunt speak of her?" continued De Vaux, without replying to her question.

"Let me think," said Marian. "I believe I have: but no, I cannot remember that I ever did, now I reflect upon it: no, I never did."

"Nor my father either?" asked De Vaux.

“ No, never; certainly never,” answered Marian.

“ Well, then——” said De Vaux, and he paused abruptly, fixing his eyes upon her face. Instantly a colour of the deepest crimson rushed up over the whole countenance of Marian de Vaux, dyeing cheek, and neck, and forehead, with the blush of generous shame — the shame that every pure, virtuous, inexperienced woman feels, when the idea of vice in her own sex is suddenly brought before her.

Edward de Vaux turned deadly pale, as he both perceived that Marian had now caught his meaning, and comprehended most painfully the feelings in which that bright blush arose. The shame that Marian felt for the degradation of her sex touched the most agonised spot in De Vaux’s heart. All that hatred for vice, and scorn for the vicious, and the pity which comes near contempt, could produce in a woman’s bosom, seemed to De Vaux expressed by that blush, and pointed, more or less directly, towards himself; and, as I have said, he turned very pale.

The deep emotion that he felt overpowered him for an instant; but then he made a great

exertion, and, rising from the sofa, "Marian," he said, "I have now told you all, even to my innermost thoughts; and I have but one word to add, my dear, dear cousin. Nearly three years ago, you assured me of your love, and promised me your hand; and every member of your family willingly consented to our ultimate union; but then I was the Honourable Edward De Vaux, the heir to one of the most ancient peerages in England, and to twenty thousand per annum. Things have now changed; and, if the assertions in this letter, and my own suspicions be correct, I am now a nameless, illegitimate beggar, without a right to any thing on earth, but my sword and my reputation — with shame upon my mother's head — with nothing to claim from my father, and without even a name that I can offer you. Under these circumstances, though I shall love you to the last day of my life, and think of you through every moment in the whole course of time, I give you back your promise, I free you from all engagement, and leave you totally untied to a connection, from which your friends will naturally be glad enough to separate you."

He spoke calmly, slowly, and distinctly; but the deadly paleness of his countenance showed

how deeply he was moved at heart ; and Marian gazed upon him, with her long dark eyelashes raised high, her beautiful eyes full upon his face, and her lip slightly trembling while he went on. As soon as he had ceased, she rose from the sofa ; and, with agitation, and ardour, all unlike her usual calmness, cast herself at once upon his bosom, with her arms circling his neck, her lips pressed upon his cheek, and her tears falling rapidly upon him. “ Edward, Edward ! ” she cried, “ I am yours—all yours ! Could you—could you do such injustice to your own Marian ? You have given me back my promise, and I here give it you again—so that, whatever comes, I may never hear from any one a single word against our union. Nay, nay, let me speak—it is seldom that I am vehement ; but I must speak now—you have my promise, most solemnly, most strictly ; and I consider myself as much bound to you as if I were your wife. Not only shall no other person upon earth ever have my hand ; but, whatever happens, and whoever opposes it, you shall have it, when and where you choose to ask it.”

Need I say how tenderly he pressed her to his heart ? Need I say how ardently, how sincerely he thanked her ? But still there was some slight

hesitation in his mind. He almost doubted that she fully appreciated his situation, and he felt that he could not receive such a promise as she had made till she comprehended all. He bade her think, then, of the whole; and conjured her to remember, that it was not alone the loss of name and station, but that, if his anticipations were correct, every thing like wealth, or even competence, would also be lost to him.

But all Marian's reserve was now gone; and the long-restrained feelings of her heart flowed forth altogether. "Nay, nay, Edward!" she said, again seating herself on the sofa, without, however, withdrawing the small soft hand he held in his: "nay, nay, Edward, have I not enough for us both? — enough to give us every comfort. Nay, every luxury that we ought to have, we shall still possess; and why need we wish for more? Do you think that the coach and six, and the golden-coated coachman, and the three lackeys on the foot-board, ever entered into my calculations of happiness?"

"No; but, dearest Marian," he replied, "it is only painful to me to think, that I bring nothing to unite to your property. Your large fortune renders it only the more necessary that I should have one too——"

“Hush, hush, hush!” cried Marian, eagerly: but still he went on:—“I have to owe you every thing, Marian; love, and happiness, and rank, and station, and fortune too.”

“And will you, Edward, *you* talk so proudly to Marian de Vaux?” she exclaimed. “Will you be too haughty to enjoy all the blessings that we possess, because it is Marian that gives them? Is not that which is mine, yours? Has it not been so since we were children? Do not distress me, Edward, by one thought of such a kind. Indeed, I shall think you do not love me—that you are going to refuse my offered hand——”

“Oh, Marian, Marian!” he cried, kissing it a thousand times, while something very bright, and not unlike a tear, glittered in his eye. “I would not lose it for a thousand worlds! Distress you! dearest girl! I grieve to have distressed you for a moment; but I felt myself bound to tell you all.”

“Oh, that does not distress me at all,” replied Marian: “the only thing that could distress me would be to see you grieve, or to think that you should make a difference, even in thought, between what is yours and what is mine. I declare, Edward, I never knew what

it was to feel glad of a large fortune before ; but now I am thankful, not only for what my mother left me, but for every shilling that my good old grand-uncle and guardian has scraped together for me, by his economy thereof. Three thousand a-year, Edward—consider, we shall be as rich as princes ; and if it had not been for that, this misfortune might have obliged us to wait on for many a year, till you had made a fortune in India, and very likely have lost your health, which no fortune could have compensated.”

Marian de Vaux spoke in a manner totally different from that which her cousin had seen her display for many a year. Her beautiful eyes were full of light and feeling ; a smile, half tender, half playful, hovered over her lip, and her voice was full of eager kindness and thrilling affection. He had remembered her thus as a girl ; but, as she had grown up towards womanhood, either the feelings which had animated her bosom with such a warm and enthusiastic glow had passed away, or the expression of them had been gradually suppressed. Now, again, she was all that he remembered her, and to see her so plunged him into a sweet vision of the past—connected, though, by some fine

golden threads, with the present. He had seated himself on the sofa beside her ; and, still holding her right hand in his, he had glided his left arm round her waist, and then, with his eyes fixed on a distant spot of the floor, he remained in silence for two or three moments after she had done speaking. Unless man were a cold, unfeeling piece of ticking mechanism, like a watch, our measures of time would always be by our sensations ; and as Marian had at that moment given way to all the eagerness of her heart, the two moments that Edward de Vaux remained in thought seemed to her an age. “ What is the matter, Edward ? ” she said. “ Are you still unhappy ? ”

“ No, my beloved,” he answered, looking up in her face with a glance that fully confirmed his words : “ no, my beloved ; I am most happy ! so happy, indeed, that, were I placed as I was before, I would almost again undergo the pain which this discovery first caused me, to enjoy the delight which my Marian’s conduct has bestowed.”

“ And did you doubt what that conduct would be, Edward ? ” she demanded, half reproachfully. Edward de Vaux coloured, and might have hesitated ; for conscience, that bitter

smiter, who always finds his time to apply the lash, now struck him severely for all those images which an irritable fancy had suggested concerning Marian's conduct. But she saved him the pain of a reply, which must either have been mortifying or insincere. "And did you doubt what my conduct would be?" she asked; and in the next moment she added,—
 "But never mind, dear Edward; you see what it is, and do never doubt it again."

"I will never doubt, as long as I live,—my own beloved girl,"—he answered, ardently; "I will never doubt, as long as I live, that it will on every occasion be all that is good, and noble, and generous: but it was not that alone, my Marian, that made me so happy—so very, very happy."

"What was it, then, dear Edward?" she asked, in some surprise; for Marian, with all the quickness of a woman's perception, had noticed the passing colour that came into De Vaux's cheek; and, knowing him, and all the little intricacies of his heart, better than he thought,—better, perhaps, than she thought herself,—she had instantly set down the blush to its right cause, and said in her own heart, "Edward has been tormenting himself with

fancies." Now, however, his words puzzled her, though a latent consciousness of having—in the urgency of the moment, and in the desire to sooth and render Edward patient under his misfortune—a latent consciousness of having given free course to feelings and enthusiasms which she had long held close prisoners in her bosom, made her now feel embarrassed in turn; and a bright warm blush, partly from curiosity, partly from that consciousness, mantled for a moment in her cheek.

Edward de Vaux gazed upon her as she put her question with a smile, full of deep, fond affection—with a sort of triumphant happiness, too, in his look that made her inclined, she knew not why, to hide her eyes upon his bosom, as she had done long ago, when first she had acknowledged to him the love that he had won, and witnessed the joy that it called up in his countenance. "I will tell you what it is, dearest," he answered, "that makes me now so happy, that I should have considered any thing but yourself a light sacrifice to obtain such joy. It is, that the misfortune which has befallen me has called forth my beloved Marian's true and natural character, and shown her to me fully, as the same, dear, excellent, feeling, enthusiastic

girl that I have always pictured her to my own imagination—such as her feelings as a child gave promise that she would be—such as I remember her appearing constantly, not many years ago.”

Marian blushed, and looked down; and there was a swimming moisture in her eyes, which a little more might have caused to overflow in tears: but they would not have been unhappy ones. She felt——

But it is difficult to say what she felt. It was not that she felt detected, for that word would imply a shade of culpability which she did not feel; but she felt that she had betrayed herself—that a veil which she had cast over the true features of her mind, from many a deep and complicated motive, had been raised—had been snatched away, and could never be dropped effectually again. The effect which the raising of that veil had produced was all glad and gratifying, it is true; but still there was that fluttering emotion at her heart, which the disclosure of long-hidden feelings must always produce: she felt as if she had told her love for the first time over again; and she knew, too, that she might be called upon to assign motives, and give reasons, which would be difficult to explain, but

which she determined not to withhold, for many a good and sufficient cause. But all this agitated her. She blushed, she almost trembled; and Edward de Vaux was but the more convinced, from the agitation which he beheld, that the concealment of her real character, and the repression of her finest feelings, had been a conscious and voluntary act on the part of her he loved.

He became curious, as well he might be, to learn more; and, as Marian still sat silently beside him, he tried the tacit persuasion of a gentle kiss upon the blushing cheek, that almost touched his shoulder. She turned round towards him with a thoughtful smile; but, as she did not speak, he asked more boldly, "Why, Marian, why, dearest, after having given me your love, and promised me your hand, have you let that dear little heart play at hide and seek with me, till I have sometimes almost doubted whether it was my own?"

"You should not have doubted that, De Vaux," Marian answered; "but, if you really wish to know why I have somewhat changed my conduct since I was a girl, and why I have, in some degree, repressed feelings that I have not experienced the less warmly, I will let you

into some of the secrets of a woman's heart; but you must promise me, Edward, never to abuse the trust," she added, smiling more gaily; "and you must promise, too, not to be angry with any thing I shall say."

"Angry! angry with you, Marian!" said De Vaux; "do not believe such a thing possible."

Marian smiled again, for there is often a sort of prophetic presentiment in the breast of woman, which teaches her that, however much she may rule and command the lover, the husband will not receive the power in vain; and, perhaps, it is this knowledge of the shortness of their reign which sometimes makes women abuse it a little while it lasts. Marian smiled again at De Vaux's words, and then replied, "Well, then, Edward, keep your part of the compact, and I will tell you all. You say I have changed very much since I was a girl; and that is but natural, Edward; for, depend upon it, every woman does change, if she feels and thinks at all deeply. As a girl, her words and her actions are all of but little importance in the eyes of those around her, or in her own, unless she be nourished in conceit and affectation from her cradle; and, during the first fifteen

or sixteen years of her life, though she may be taught to act like a lady, yet she sees no reason for concealing any thing she feels, or any thing she thinks, if it be not likely to hurt the feelings of others. As she goes on towards womanhood, however, the world changes its conduct towards her, and she finds it necessary to change towards it. She learns to look upon trifles in her own conduct, and in the conduct of others towards her, as matters of importance: the world and society assume a different aspect: she trembles lest she should say, or do, or feel what is wrong; and very often she expresses too little of what she feels, lest she should express too much. Then, too, Edward," continued Marian, with the colour which had partly left her cheek while she spoke coming richly up again, and spreading over her whole face, "then, too, Edward, if she learns to love, all those fears and apprehensions are a thousand fold increased. She is terrified at her own sensations, and almost thinks it wrong and sacrilegious to suffer that one being by whom her affections are won to take that station in her heart, above all the rest of the world, which she has hitherto devoted solely to a being beyond the world. Perhaps before that time,

she may have longed to love and be beloved; but the first moment she feels that it is so, — especially if it come upon her suddenly, — depend upon it, her feelings are, more or less, those of terror.”

De Vaux smiled, but his hand pressed tenderly upon Marian’s as he did so; and she felt it was as much a smile of thanks, as if he had accompanied it with words of ever so much gratitude for the picture of her feelings that she had given him. She paused, however, for she was coming to matter which she feared might not please him so well; and his thoughts turning, too, in the same direction, he said, after waiting for a few moments to see if she would go on, “But, dear Marian, this happens to every woman without producing such a change as I have seen in you; and besides, what I have seen to-day, Marian, has shown me fully that there has been some more distinct and individual motive. Tell it me, Marian, tell it me, my beloved; and believe me, I will not abuse your confidence.”

“Nor be angry?” she said, smiling again. “Remember, that is a principal part of our agreement. Well, then, I will go on. When first we were engaged to each other, Edward,

my chief thought — as, indeed, it ever has been since — was how to make the man I loved most completely happy, as far as my own conduct was concerned; and I was reading at that time a very clever book, which recommended women, on their marriage, to study, not alone the general character of their husband, but all his individual opinions and thoughts, in order to make their own behaviour completely conformable thereto; it asserted, also, that such was the surest way of winning happiness for both. I believed it, and resolved to try to follow the advice even before marriage. I listened to every thing you said, concerning the conduct of other women that we knew, with a determination of trying to acquire the qualities that you praised, and to avoid all that you blamed.”

“ But, good God! my dearest Marian!” exclaimed Edward, warmly, “ surely I did not blame them for suffering the beauties or the excellences of their natural characters to appear, nor praise them for assuming a coldness that was the most opposed to the general warmth of their nature?”

“ Not exactly, Edward,” replied Marian; “ but I will tell you what you did, which came

much to the same purpose. Though whatever I did seemed to give you pleasure, yet, when you spoke of any of our acquaintance, you were so severe upon what appeared to me very slight mistakes in their demeanour; you were so rigid in your ideas of what was right in general behaviour; you even once censured so heavily a display, rather too open, of attachment to her husband, on the part of a lady whom we both knew, that I began to find that your opinions on such subjects were very nice indeed: and knowing," added Marian, with a smile, which De Vaux felt fully, "and knowing that my lover, with these nice opinions, was peculiarly sensitive to every thing that he thought could draw the slightest degree of ridicule upon him or his, I determined so to school my own conduct, and to repress the expression of my own feelings, as to insure his heart against the slightest annoyance, concerning a word, or a movement, or a look of his wife."

Marian paused, and Edward de Vaux, with his eyes bent upon the ground, remained silent, for two or three minutes, till she became alarmed. "You promised me, Edward," she said, "not to be angry."

"Not to be angry with you, my beloved

girl," he said; "but I did not promise not to be angry with myself; and well, well do I deserve it."

"Nay, nor must you be angry with yourself either, Edward," replied Marian; "if you are, I shall still think some of it lights upon me. If in seeking the means of rendering you happy, I have made you unhappy, I shall meet with punishment instead of reward."

"Dearest Marian," answered De Vaux, "it were vain to deny it. I have been a fastidious fool hitherto; and, like the other sneerers of this world, have been seeking the mote in my brother's eye, while I have forgot the beam in my own. But henceforth I will take example by you, dearest Marian, and so school my own heart as to get over that feeling of the ridiculous in others, and terror for it in myself, which I now find and believe to be a vice, and not a quality."

Marian shook her head with a doubtful smile, as if she would have said, "It is in your nature, Edward."

"I will, indeed, Marian," he continued; "and you shall see what a strong resolution can do even with Edward de Vaux. But you must promise me in return, dearest, to reward

my efforts, by casting off the reserve that my foolish fastidiousness has drawn over you. The qualities of my Marian's heart and mind are too beautiful to be hidden beneath such a veil."

Marian smiled again, but looked a little thoughtful, for she felt that the task her lover would impose was no easy one. "I will do my best, Edward," she said; "but it must be by degrees. In the first place, all the world would think me mad, if I were to change suddenly from the quiet still-life demeanour of Marian de Vaux, and take up the gay, lively, enthusiastic character of Isadore Falkland; and, in the next place, it would be impossible, for I have now been training myself to this behaviour so long, that it has become quite habitual to me; and, whatever are the emotions that I feel at heart, my first effort — even before I know I am making one — is to keep those emotions from appearing. Sometimes, indeed," she added, laughing, "they break through all restraint, as they have done to-day; but that is only on great occasions. However, I will do my best to change back again; and, perhaps, as I have overdone the quiet and composed, I may find the happy medium, in returning to

my old thoughtlessness. But, in the mean time, Edward, never you be deceived in regard to what I feel. You have seen the veil, as you call it, cast away; and you know entirely what is beneath it."

"A thousand, thousand thanks, for letting me see it, Marian," he replied: "but I can never thank you enough, my beloved, for all that you have done this day — for showing me your heart, and for giving me a glimpse, too, of my own."

"But I owe you thanks, too, Edward — deep and many thanks," replied Marian, "for the generous candour of your conduct; and for not shrinking, even for a moment, from making me a sharer in your thoughts and feelings, however painful they might be to communicate. And oh, Edward, let me entreat you ever to pursue the same course hereafter. Let me be the sharer of all your thoughts; let me hear every thing painful or to be feared, from your own lips, and the tale will lose half its bitterness; and I promise you that, if I cannot assist you with advice and support, I will not embarrass you by womanly fear, or weak irresolution."

"I will, Marian, I will!" replied De Vaux;

“ for I can contemplate no case in which what I had to communicate would combine half so many sources of pain and anxiety as that which is just past: and now, dearest, then, give me your advice in regard to the course I ought to pursue in investigating this very painful business.”

“ Do you not think, Edward,” said Marian, “ that you had better not investigate it at all? If, by letting it rest, and treating this information with contempt, you were likely to injure any one, of course I should say, sift it to the last grain. But it seems that these people, whoever they are, that send you such disagreeable tidings, hold out our approaching marriage as the only motive for your enquiry farther; and, as you have told me the whole without reserve, and I am perfectly satisfied, I see no reason why you should trouble yourself farther about it. If you are to lose the titles and estates of your father on any pretext, let the gipsies send their information to the person who is to benefit by your loss. I would think no more of it.”

De Vaux shook his head, for his vivid imagination and exciteable nature did not fit him for sitting down quietly under such a load of suspense. “ No, no, Marian !” he said, I could

not bear such uncertainty; I should not know an hour's peace, and whenever a letter was put into my hand, whenever a stranger desired to speak with me, I should dread some evil tidings. Investigate the matter thoroughly I must. If I find these insinuations false, my peace will be established upon a surer rock than ever; and my disposition may not be the worse for the ordeal I have undergone, and the lessons I have received. If my fears prove just, and these tidings true, I think, dear Marian — I think," and he drew her nearer to his heart — "I think that, with the assurance of such love as yours, I can see all the rest that was bright in my lot pass away from me without a sigh."

Marian's heart was relieved, for she had doubted how Edward de Vaux would endure the certainty which might soon be forced upon him, of the severe reverses which were yet unconfirmed. She had doubted, and, with all the skilful tenderness of a woman's heart, she had at once perceived that the most open assurances of her own love were the surest antidotes that she could offer him against the evils of the day. She had acted, it is true, by impulse; but there is always some rapidly operating motive even at the bottom of impulse

itself, which, nine times out of ten, works with wonderful sagacity. There are many moments in the life of man, when his boasted reason — which is but a slow and considerate personage — has not time to act; and when, if there were no power but this same reason to save us from drowning, we might drown beyond redemption for any thing that reason would do to help us: but God, who gives their never-failing instinct to the beasts, does not leave man without resource in those moments when haste, and need, and apprehension, render him little better than a judgment-less animal, and has afforded him also a kind of instinct—a power which only acts, on sudden emergencies, when reason has not time; which power we call impulse, but which is neither more nor less than the instinct of a hurry.

Marian de Vaux had, in the first instance, acted upon impulse, but as she went on, finding that impulse was quite right, and that the only means to sooth and to strengthen her lover under his misfortunes, was to let him see throughout the full extent of her love for him, she cast away, as we have seen, every reserve, and showed Edward de Vaux that he could but lose little, whatever he lost, compared with

that inestimable affection which was still his own.

Marian's heart was relieved by perceiving that her conduct had been successful, and that De Vaux was nerved against the worst; and, as she had no particular taste for suspense herself, any more than he had, she now recalled her words, and advised him, if his feelings were such as he expressed, to pursue the investigation at once.

“That, Marian, for all our sakes and on every account, I must do,” he replied; “but the only question with me is, in which way had I better follow the enquiry. Here are two courses pointed out in this letter,—to apply at once to my father; or, in the first place, to visit this gipsy, and to ascertain precisely what information he possesses. I have already considered, and believe that the latter course would be the best; but my Marian has every right to guide me.

“Oh! do not go to the gipsy,” cried Marian on the first impulse—but impulse was wrong in this instance, and Marian soon found that it was so. Edward himself paused, and thought over the matter again; but, on consideration, Marian remembered many an objection to the

plan of seeking information from Lord Dewry himself. She knew his haughtiness and his violence, and she knew, too, that De Vaux, tingling under a sense of degradation, and feeling that such degradation was attributable to his father, was in no state of mind to submit to the proud and insulting tone Lord Dewry too often employed, or to speak calmly and dispassionately upon a subject, in regard to which his whole heart was bleeding, and every better feeling deeply wounded. She dreaded the collision which might ensue between the two, and she thought it also very probable that Lord Dewry might refuse all information on the subject. "I am afraid I am wrong, Edward," she said at length; "I have a dread of those gipsies, — I do not know why; but still, perhaps, you should be more sure that such insinuations as these are not mere calumny, before you speak to your father about it."

"That is true, my love," replied De Vaux; "and, besides, I have just remembered, that, I wish to have the gipsy's information at all, I must have it before I see my father. He here in this letter tells me to come either this evening, or to-morrow early. Now, it is too late to go to my father this evening, and before I

could be back, if I went over to-morrow, the time would be expired, and the gipsy gone. I think my best plan will be to go early to the gipsy camp to-morrow morning, hear all the man has to say, and then, if necessary, I can ride over to the hall and speak with my father ere he goes out.

“ Yes, I doubt not, that such is the best course, replied Marian ; “ but for God’s sake, Edward, take care of those gipsies. They are, I believe, a terrible race of savages ; and you told me that this was a large encampment which you saw in the wood. They might murder you, Edward, for your purse or your watch.”

“ Oh, no fear, no fear, dearest ! ” replied De Vaux ; “ you see they never attempted to murder Manners to-day, though he was there at five or six in the morning, and his purse is likely to be much better filled than mine ; and as they knew him, and know me, they must know also that his fortune is larger than mine ever will be.”

“ But they may have some motive of revenge against you, Edward,” repeated Marian, contriving to increase her fears most wonderfully, by thinking over them : “ they have evidently some greater knowledge of our situation,

and some deeper motive for their conduct, than is apparent: and may they not wish to entrap you for some purpose of revenge?"

"I never injured one of them by word or deed, Marian," replied De Vaux; "and if you will consider for a moment, dearest, you will see that they can have no evil intention, at least, towards my person. In the first place, they sent the letter by Manners, and therefore must feel assured that other people will know of my visiting their encampment; and in the next place, this man — this Pharold, leaves the matter open to me to come to him, or to speak with my father on the subject. Had they any design against me, they would have contrived to convey the letter to me secretly, and would have taken care to tell me that I could get the information they offer nowhere but from themselves. Besides, they cannot be sure that I may not make the whole matter public, and come up with half a dozen companions."

This reasoning calmed Marian de Vaux not a little; but still she was fearful, and could not banish from her mind a kind of foreboding that evil would come of Edward's visit to the gipsy. She knew, however, what absurd things forebodings are; and she felt how natural it

was to be anxious and apprehensive for an object in which all her affections centered, the moment that a situation of danger presented itself, without seeking for any supernatural inspirations to justify her fears. At every reported movement of the armies, during her lover's absence, she had too often felt the same alarm to give any great weight now to the fear she experienced, against the voice of reason and conviction; and seeing that De Vaux had every probability on his side of the argument, she ceased to oppose him by a word.

“At all events, Edward,” she said, “for my sake, do not go unarmed: that precaution cannot be very burdensome.”

“Certainly not,” replied he, “and I will take my pistols with me, with all my heart, as well as my sword, if it will give you the slightest pleasure, Marian; though I am sure, my beloved, I shall have to use neither.”

“Well, you shall do it for my sake, Edward,” said Marian; “and I think that to know it is so, will lighten the weight upon you.”

De Vaux's answer was the precise one which any other man would have made in the same situation; and some farther conversation

ensued of no great import, in the course of which Marian proposed to her cousin to make Colonel Manners the companion of his expedition. She understood fully, however, the objections which, in reply, he urged against imparting to any one but herself a suspicion which so materially affected his station in society, his fortune, and even his happiness; and those objections having been stated to the reader before, it may be unnecessary to repeat them here. Suffice it to say, that their conversation continued so long that Marian's toilet for the dinner-table was far more hurried than her maid approved. Marian, however — safe in beauty and secure in love — felt that she could go down to dinner, even if a curl or two did stray from its right place; and there was something in her heart that made her never regret the moments given to Edward de Vaux.

CHAP. X.

WE left Colonel Charles Manners standing at the library door, with his hand upon the great brazen ball, embossed with sundry figures, which served as the handle to the lock. It may be remembered that Colonel Manners, being somewhat troubled with the internal contention between feeling for his friend's uneasiness, and wonder for its cause, was seeking an empty room to let those two emotions calm themselves: but when he turned the above brazen ball, and the door opened to his will, he found that he had been mistaken in looking for solitude there; for the first things he saw were, a very beautiful face, and a pair of bright gay eyes, looking up at him, from the other side of the little table on the left hand, with the hat and feathers, which it was then customary for ladies to wear in riding, thrown somewhat back from the forehead, so as to show the whole countenance of Isadore Falkland, raising her face with a look of half-laughing vexation, as if asking, "Who is about

to disturb me now, when I came here in search of solitude?"

The interpretation of the expression was so self-evident, that Colonel Manners paused with a smile; and Isadore, finding that her face had told the truth somewhat too plainly, laughed and begged him to come in. "Nay, Miss Falkland," said Manners, "I will not disturb you. Your look, I can assure you, said, *Not at home!* as plain as those words ever were spoken," — and he took a step back as if to withdraw.

"The servant made a mistake, then," replied Isadore; "I did not bid him say, *Not at home*, to Colonel Manners. But the truth is, I am endeavouring to compose my mind."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed in some surprise, "I am very sorry to hear that any thing has occurred to agitate it."

"And can *you* say so, Colonel Manners," asked Isadore laughing, "when you, yourself, were art and part in the deed?"

Manners was still more surprised; but, as he saw that the agitation of which Miss Falkland complained was of no very serious nature, it only affected him so far as to bring him two steps farther into the room.

"If I am one of the culprits," he said, ap-

proaching nearer the table, where Isadore sat enjoying his astonishment, — for hers was one of those light and happy hearts that can win a drop of honey from every flower, however small, — “ if I am one of the culprits, I claim the right of an Englishman to hear the charge fairly read, Miss Falkland. Otherwise I refuse to plead.”

“ Well, then, Colonel Manners,” she replied, “ you stand arraigned of having galloped as fast, when riding with two ladies, as if you had been at the head of your regiment ; and of being art and part with Edward de Vaux in shaking the little brains possessed by one Isadore Falkland out of their proper place. The truth is,” she added more seriously, “ that after riding very fast, my ideas, which are never in a very composed and tranquil state, get into such a whirl, that I am always obliged to come and read some good book for a quarter of an hour ere I dare venture into rational society. Do you feel the same, Colonel Manners ?”

“ Not exactly,” answered Manners smiling, “ but I rather fancy that I am more accustomed to galloping than you are, Miss Falkland ; and that had you been as much used to that exercise as I have been, during eighteen years’ service, you would find your ideas quite

as clear, after the longest gallop that ever was ridden, as they were before you set out."

By this time Colonel Manners had so far carried on his approaches that he was in the midst of the library, the door shut behind him; and a sofa in the window — not very far from Miss Falkland's left hand, with two or three books upon a console hard by — within one step of his position. What Isadore rejoined to his reply matters little. It was just sufficient to seat him on the sofa, with a book in his hand, which he had not the slightest intention of reading; and a conversation began, which, though it had no particular tendency, and was of no particular import, stretched itself over full three quarters of an hour. It was, however, one of those conversations which are the most pleasant that it is possible to imagine — one of those conversations, when an intelligent man and an intelligent woman sit down, without the intention of talking about any thing in particular, and end by talking of every thing under the sun. They must, however, feel convinced, like Isadore and Colonel Manners, that there is not the slightest chance on earth of their falling in love with each other; for the least drop of love, or any thing like it, changes the

whole essence of the thing, and it is no longer conversation. But Isadore and Colonel Manners never dreamt of such a thing; and went on, letting subject run into subject, and thought follow thought, as they liked—not like a regiment of infantry, indeed, advancing in single file, one behind the other, with measured step and stiff demeanour, but like a bevy of rosy children rushing from a school-room door, sometimes one at a time, sometimes two or three linked hand in hand together, sometimes half a dozen in a crowd tumbling over one another's shoulders. Thus ran on their ideas, gaily, lightly, of every variety of face and complexion, without ceremony and without restraint. It is true it required some activity to keep up the game with spirit, for both were rapid; and Isadore, when she could not easily express herself in one way, often took another, more fanciful and flowery, so that had not Manners's wit been as agile as her own he might often have been left behind.

The moments flew rapidly till, as we have said, three quarters of an hour had passed, as it were a minute; and neither Colonel Manners nor Isadore Falkland would have known that it had passed at all, had not a clock struck

in the hall hard by, and Isadore suddenly thought that *somebody*—that great bugbear *Somebody*—might deem it strange that she sat talking to Colonel Manners alone in the library, while the rest of the family were probably in the drawing-room. She now remembered, also, that she had still her riding-habit to change; and having by this time quite forgotten that Colonel Manners was an ugly man, she made the alteration of her dress an excuse to leave him, though, to speak truth, she broke off their conversation with regret, and felt inclined to look upon the moments she had thus spent as one of the pleasantest things she had yet met with in the garland of time—that garland which begins in buds and blossoms, and ends in blighted flowers and withered leaves.

Manners, for his part,—though he had from the first thought her a very beautiful girl, and a very charming one, too,—had by this time determined that she was possessed of many a more admirable quality of mind and grace of person than he had even believed before; and an involuntary sigh, which broke from his lips when she left him, taught him to feel that it was as well, upon the whole, that he was so soon to

take his departure. It was a part of his policy never to encourage regrets in regard to a state of life which he had made up his mind could not be his; and he found that to live long in the same house with Isadore Falkland might cultivate those regrets much more than was desirable.

When she was gone, he thought for a moment over what had just passed, gave another moment to memories of the long gone, spent two or three more in trifling with the book he held in his hand, and then, after changing his boots in his own room, proceeded to the drawing-room. Mrs. Falkland was now there alone, but it was not long before Isadore again appeared; and, in a few minutes after, De Vaux, as we have before shown, entered the room for a single instant to enquire for Marian. Neither his aunt nor his cousin perceived that any thing had occurred to disturb his equanimity: but the eyes of his friend, quickened perhaps by what he already knew, discovered without difficulty that the pain which had been given him by the letter he had himself delivered was not at all diminished by reflection; and although he felt that he could ask no questions, he was not a little anxious for the result.

Some time passed, ere it was necessary to dress

for dinner, without any thing of importance, either in word or deed, occurring in the drawing-room, except inasmuch as Mrs. Falkland informed Colonel Manners that a lady was to dine with them on that day who had also enjoyed the advantage of his mother's acquaintance in her youth. Isadore pronounced her a foolish, tiresome woman; and Manners, on hearing her name, said he had met her some years before, but did not venture to dissent from Miss Falkland's opinion.

Mrs. Falkland smiled, and tacitly acknowledged that her own judgment of the good lady's qualities was not very different, by saying that she had merely invited her because she knew that she would feel hurt were she to hear that Colonel Manners had been long at Morley House without her having seen him. "And I never wish to hurt people's feelings, Colonel Manners," she added, "unless when it is very necessary indeed."

"It is never worth while, my dear madam," replied Manners; "and I believe that, with a little sacrifice of our own comfort, without any sacrifice of sincerity, we can always avoid it, however disagreeable people may be."

Manners was in the drawing-room amongst

the first after dressing, and he looked with some degree of anxiety for the appearance of De Vaux, in order to see whether the tidings he had received still continued to affect him so strongly. But when De Vaux came in his manner had wholly changed. His conversation with Marian had had the effect which such a conversation might be expected to have. The recollection of it, too, as a whole, while he had been dressing, had done as much as the conversation itself. It had shown him a sweet and consoling result, unmingled with any of the painful feelings, to which all he had himself been called upon to communicate, had given rise in his own breast. The gipsy's letter, and the suspicions which it called up, had shaken and agitated him, had taken away the foundations from the hopes and expectations of his whole life ; but that which had past between him and her he loved had re-established all, and fixed the hopes of future happiness on a surer and a nobler basis than ever. He trod with a firmer, ay, and with a prouder, step, than when he had fancied himself the heir of broad lands and lordships ; and when Marian herself soon after entered the room, his face lighted up with a happy glow, like the top of

some high hill when it receives the first rays of the morning sun. Marian herself, too, blushed as she appeared, for all the display of her heart's inmost feelings, which she had that morning made to her lover's eyes, had left a consciousness about her heart—a slight but tremulous agitation, which brought the warm blood glowing into her cheek. There was nothing like unhappiness, however, left in the countenance of either; and Manners became satisfied that whatever had been the contents of the gipsy's letter, the evil effects thereof were passing away.

The Lady Barbara Simpson at length arrived with her husband in her train, and was most tiresomely pleased to see Colonel Manners. She was a worthy dame in the plenitude of ten lustres, in corporeal qualities heavy, and in intellectual ones certainly not light. Vulgarity is, unfortunately, to be found in every rank, — *unfortunately*, because, where found in high rank, in which every means and appliance is at hand to remedy it, its appearance argues vulgarity of mind, to which the coarseness of the peasant is comparatively grace. Now Lady Barbara Simpson was of the vulgar great; and, though the blood of all the Howards might

have flowed in her veins, the pure and honourable stream would have been choked up by the mental mud of her nature. In her youth, no sum or labour had been spared to ornament her mind with those accomplishments and graces which are common in her class ; and as music and drawing, and a knowledge of languages, are things which, to a certain degree, may be hung on like a necklace or a bracelet, the mind of Lady Barbara was perfectly well dressed before her parents had done with her education. But nothing could make the mind itself any thing but what it was ; and the load of accomplishments, which masters of all kinds strove hard to bestow, rested upon it, like jewels on an ugly person, fine things seen to a disadvantage. The want of consideration for other people's feelings, or rather the want of that peculiar delicacy of sensation called *tact*, which teaches rapidly to understand what other people's feelings are, she fancied a positive, instead of a negative, quality, and called it in her own mind ease and good-humour ; and thus, though she certainly was a good-tempered woman, her coarseness of feeling and comprehension rendered her ten times more annoying to every one near her than if she had been as malevolent as Tisiphone.

During dinner, Manners felt as if he were sitting next to somebody clothed in hair-cloth, which caught his dress at every turn, and scrubbed him whenever he touched it; and his comfort was not greatly increased by finding himself an object of great attention and patronage to Lady Barbara. Opposite to him sat Isadore Falkland; and, though it was certainly a great relief to look in so fair a face, yet there was in it an expression of amused pity for Lady Barbara's martyr that was a little teasing. Her Ladyship first descanted enthusiastically upon the beauty of Colonel Manners's mother, and called upon Mrs. Falkland to vouch how very lovely she was. Mrs. Falkland assented as briefly as possible; and Lady Barbara then took wine with Colonel Manners, and declared that there was not the slightest resemblance between him and his mother, examining every feature in his face as she did so to make herself sure of the fact.

At this point of the proceedings Manners was more amused than annoyed; for his own ugliness was no secret to himself, and he therefore knew well that it could be no secret to others. He laughed then at her Ladyship's scrutiny, and replied, "I was once considered

very like my mother, Lady Barbara; but whatever resemblance I did possess was carried away by my enemy, the small-pox."

"Oh yes," she cried in return, "a dreadful disease that! Shocking the ravages it sometimes makes! I see you must have had it very bad."

"Very bad, indeed, Lady Barbara," replied Colonel Manners with a laughing glance towards Miss Falkland; "and, what is worse, I had it at that period of life when one has just learned to value good looks, without having learned to despise them."

"Oh, terrible!" exclaimed Lady Barbara, really commiserating him; "it must have made a terrible change in you, indeed. Dear me, what a pity!"

Marian de Vaux was pained for Colonel Manners, and she now interposed with a few words, endeavouring to change the subject; but Lady Barbara was like a hollow square of infantry, and could *faire face partout*, so that poor Marian only drew the fire on herself. Lady Barbara answered her question, and then added, "And so I hear you are going to be married in a fortnight, Miss de Vaux. Well, I wish you happy, with all my heart; though

marriage is always a great risk ; God knows, is it not, Mr. Simpson ?”

“ It is, indeed, my dear,” replied Mr. Simpson, a quiet little man with much sterling good sense concealed under an insignificant exterior, and with a certain degree of subacid fun in his nature, which was habitually brought forth by the absurdities of his wife, — “ it is, indeed, my dear ;” and he finished with an audible and perhaps not unintentional sigh, which gave point to his reply.

“ But, for all that, it is a very good, and a very proper state, too,” rejoined Lady Barbara, “ and a very happy one, after all.”

“ I am glad you find it so, my dear,” said Mr. Simpson ; but Lady Babara went on, as usual, without attending to her husband.

“ I would advise all young people to marry,” she said, “ but not too young though,” — she herself had married at thirty-five, — “ not too young though, for then they only have such large families they do not know what to do with them. But now at a proper age every one ought to marry. Now, Colonel Manners, why are not you married ? You ought to have been married before this.”

The reader knows that she was upon danger-

ous ground: but Manners was too good a politician to show that he was touched; and, therefore, he determined in reply to put that as a jest, which had a good deal of serious earnest in it. "Oh, my dear madam," he answered, "you forget I am too ugly; I should never find a wife now."

"Oh, nonsense, nonsense!" she answered, "ugliness has nothing to do with it; many a woman will marry the ugliest man in the world sooner than not marry at all; and besides, you ought to have a good fortune, Colonel Manners; and that is a great thing. But, I can tell you, you will certainly never find a wife, as you say, unless you ask some one."

The draught was bitter enough; but Manners was indomitable, and answered still gaily, "Nay, nay, Lady Barbara, I am so diffident of my own merits, and so completely convinced that no one will ever fall in love with my beautiful countenance, that I shall certainly never marry till some lady asks me. It would require that proof, at least, to convince me that I had any chance of being loved."

"And if any lady were to ask you," continued the unmerciful Lady Barbara, "would

you really marry her after all, Colonel Manners?"

"I believe I may answer that it would depend upon circumstances," replied Colonel Manners with a grave smile; "as, unfortunately for my happiness, your Ladyship's marriage has put you out of the question."

"Oh, do not let me be in the way in the least degree," rejoined Mr. Simpson from the other side of the table.

De Vaux was fairly driven to a laugh; and Lady Barbara, beginning to find out that there was an error somewhere, paused for a moment, and went on with her dinner.

However skilfully and courageously a man may struggle against his own feelings, on those points where they have intrenched themselves by long habit and possession, yet, when forced by circumstances to treat as a matter of common conversation subjects that are habitually painful to him, there are slight traits — each almost imperceptible, but making something in the aggregate — which will betray what is going on within; sometimes to the eyes of another man, and almost always to those of a woman. A degree of bitterness will mingle with his gaiety; a sigh will sometimes tread upon the heels of a

smile; and a deeper gravity will follow the transient, superficial laugh, and distinguish the true from the assumed. Women, by a more refined nature, by a necessity of concealing their own feelings under various disguises, and by the habit of judging others by slight indications, are rendered infinitely more capable of penetrating the veil with which we are often obliged to cover our deeper sentiments. Both Marian de Vaux and Isadore Falkland were at once in Colonel Manners's secret, and comprehended, without difficulty, how much was jest and how much was earnest in his replies to Lady Barbara. Both felt for him, too, and both were sorry for him; and as Marian, in consequence of her generous interposition in his favour, had already suffered somewhat too much by her Ladyship's answers touching matrimony, to dare the field again, Isadore entered upon the campaign with greater power, and did her best to effect a diversion. In this she was tolerably successful, though Colonel Manners did not entirely escape; and the ladies retired sooner than usual, in consequence of Mrs. Falkland's desire to support her daughter.

De Vaux, anxious for the following morning, in order that all his doubts might be brought to

a conclusion, would willingly have followed the ladies as soon as possible : but, alas ! those were days of hard drinking ; and Mr. Simpson, though by no means given to excess any more than Manners or De Vaux, had his own peculiar method of consoling himself for his lady's tiresomeness during the day, by sitting long in the evening, with the sparkling decanters and the social biscuits, by which he was sure neither to be annoyed nor contradicted. He drank his wine slowly, and with real enjoyment, pausing over every sip as a miser over every guinea, playing with the stalk of his wineglass, saying little smart things, if he had any one to hear him, and if he had not, gazing in the fire and diversifying pleasant thoughts by discovering landscapes and faces therein.

De Vaux, without any want of charity, wished every glass his last, and Colonel Manners wished himself in the drawing-room : but the *leges conviviales* of those days were far more strict than in these degenerate times ; and as the party was so small, both felt themselves obliged to sit ceremoniously at table, till suddenly Mr. Simpson perceived that neither of his companions had touched wine for half an hour, and kindly took the hint. It was now

near ten o'clock: Lady Barbara had far to go, and was compassionate towards the four bright bays that were ordered at that hour; and thus Colonel Manners was spared the execution of all the manœuvres he had planned to get out of her way in the drawing-room. The carriage was announced: De Vaux handed her down stairs; and a glad sound it was when the wheels rolled away from the door.

There are many people whose disagreeableness is of that peculiar kind that one can compensate the annoyance it occasions at the time, by laughing at it with one's friends when it is over: but, unfortunately, Lady Barbara's was of so extensive and tenacious a quality that it outlasted her presence; and Mrs. Falkland, Isadore, and Marian, all found that they could not talk of it in Colonel Manners's presence without being as disagreeable as herself. As Marian, too, had no inclination to converse upon the risks of matrimony and large families, she was cut off from mentioning her share in the annoyance; and after a quarter of an hour spent in determining, in general terms, that Lady Barbara Simpson was a very disagreeable person, the family returned to its usual course. Marian was a little anxious about Edward's

proposed excursion of the next morning: De Vaux himself was thoughtful in regard to the conduct he was to pursue towards the gipsy; and, as if by mutual consent, the whole party separated sooner than usual.

We have not, however, done with the events of that night, and, consequently, we shall follow De Vaux to his room, where he rang his bell; and on the appearance of his servant, suffered him to give him his dressing-gown and slippers. "You need not wait, William," he said, when this operation was concluded; "I have something to write — give me that desk."

The man obeyed and retired, and De Vaux proceeded to put down some notes in regard to what he was to demand of the gipsy, and what was to be the exact course he was to pursue, in order — without admitting any fact till it was proved, or committing himself in any way — to arrive both at the most accurate knowledge of his real situation, and the most incontestable proofs of whatever was affirmed by the man he went to visit.

When he had done this, he thought of going to bed; but his head ached a good deal, with all the agitation he had gone through during the day, crowned by the conversation of Lady

Barbara Simpson during dinner, and the tedium of Mr. Simpson after it; and approaching one of the windows, he drew the curtain, opened the shutters, and looked out. It was still moonlight, as when he had handed her Ladyship to her carriage; and throwing up the heavy sash, he leaned out, enjoying the cool air. The moon was just at her highest noon, and the sky was beautifully clear, except inasmuch as, every now and then, there floated across a light white cloud, which the wind seemed playfully to cast round the planet, like a veil, as she walked on in soft and modest splendour, amongst the bright eyes of all the crowd of stars. The river, gleaming like melted silver, appeared at the extremity of the park, with the line of its banks, broken here and there by majestic elms; and even beyond the grounds, glimpses of its windings might be caught among the distant fields and plantations. The little wooded promontory that flanked the park, with the higher hill, starting up from the isthmus over which the road passed, rose grandly up, like two towering steps towards the glittering heavens; and beyond, the sloping fields and their hedgerow elms, with many an undulating line, lay soft and obscure, in the sheeny moon-

light, as far as a spot where, half way up the higher hill in front, the extreme horizontal line of the distant country cut upon the sky. Scarce a sound was to be heard as De Vaux gazed forth, but the whispering of the light breeze amongst the tree tops, and the sweet plaintive belling of the deer in the park below.

“If I had known that these people would have gone so soon,” he thought, “I would have made my visit to the gipsies’ encampment to-night instead of to-morrow. The gipsies sit up, carousing by their fires, I believe, for full one half of the night; and I might have set my mind at rest about this business without waiting so long.”

The thought of going even then now struck him; and he paused for a few minutes to consider whether he ought to do so or not. “I shall not sleep, even if I go to bed,” he thought. “With all these things weighing on my mind, slumber is not very likely to visit me. A couple of hours will be enough to obtain all the information that I want; and returning home, I may sleep in certainty to-night, and to-morrow have to tell Marian that my apprehensions were groundless, or that our lot, as far as station and fortune go, must be lower than we at one time

expected. I shall then have time, too, to sleep over my information, and to lay out my plan of action for to-morrow deliberately. I wonder if any of the servants are up yet?"

The fears that Marian had expressed for his safety crossed his mind for a moment; but they crossed it merely as apprehensions, which might have given her some pain, if she knew that he was venturing to the gipsies' encampment at midnight. No doubt of his own security ever entered his thoughts; for, although De Vaux's imagination was a very active one, it was not fertile in images of personal danger. In short, he was constitutionally brave; and, like his father, did not know what corporeal fear is. "I shall only have to tell Marian," he again thought, "that I have been, and that all she was alarmed about is over."

He gave one more look to the moonlight and then closed his window. His boots were speedily drawn on; his dressing-gown exchanged for a military coat; his sword buckled to his side; and, in conformity with his promise to Marian, a brace of loaded pistols placed in his bosom. Thus equipped, he opened his door and descended the staircase. All was quiet; the lamp in the hall was still glimmering, though somewhat

faintly; the servants were all evidently in bed; and turning the key in the glass door at the end of the lobby, De Vaux opened it cautiously, and stepped out upon the lawn.

CHAP. XI.

THE moon was shining bright and clear upon Morley Down, covering every rise on which its beams fell with soft and silvery light, and casting every dell and opposite slope into dark broad shadow. From that height a slight degree of mistiness appeared, hanging over the scene in the valley: but above, all was clear; and the satellite of the earth was so bountiful of her reflected rays, that our fellow-stars could scarcely be seen in the sky, twinkling faintly, half eclipsed by her excess of splendour. The scattered bushes and stunted hawthorns, and the tumulus, with its clump of towering beeches, caught the rays, but, with the peculiar effect of trees by moonlight, the latter seemed more to absorb than to reflect the light, while their long deep shadows, cast upon the neighbouring ground, showed, at least, that they served to intercept the beams. In many of the little pits and hollows of the ground small pools of water had been formed; and so often did these appear, glistening in the moonshine,

in situations otherwise dark, that it seemed as if the light sought out purposely the objects best calculated to reflect it, and, like active benevolence in search of humble merit, followed them into the dim and lowly abodes where they had made their dwelling.

From these pools, however, the sand-pit in which the gipsies had pitched their tents was free; and the only water it contained was afforded by a small clear spring, which the labourers had cut through in digging for the produce of the pit, and which, welling from the bank, fell into a clear small basin of yellow sand that would, in all probability, have absorbed it speedily, had it not found a sudden channel amongst some smooth stones and gravel, and thence wound away, forced into a thousand meanders by the irregularity of the ground, till, issuing forth upon the common, it pursued its course down the hill, and, joined by several other brooks, poured no inconsiderable addition into the river in the valley below. It, too, caught the moonbeams, and glanced brightly in them; but that was not the only light that shone upon it, as it trickled down the bank, and rested in its little basin below. A redder and less pure gleam was reflected from its waters, for at about

twenty yards from the source, close under shelter of the high bank and overhanging bushes, the gipsies had pitched their tents; and now, though the hour was nearly midnight, they were just in the midst of those revels that often rise up from many a moor and many a planting throughout old England, while the rest of her denizens are fast asleep. The evening was as warm as if it had been far earlier in the year; and although the wind was high, it whistled sheer over the pit, without visiting with its rude search the corner thereof in which the race of wanderers had nested their encampment. The very sound, however, and the freshness of the night air, rendered the idea of a fire any thing but unpleasant; and in three different spots of the gipsy encampment the blaze rose up, and the sticks crackled, while the pots now withdrawn from the flame, the bottles of various shapes that lay round, and the cups, some of tin, some of horn, some of silver*, that cir-

* It is a peculiar trait in the character of the gipsies, remarked, I believe, in every country where they are to be found, that each individual strives to possess himself of something formed of one of the precious metals, denying himself even necessaries to procure it, and guarding it with a degree of care which the race extend to few other things. By some writers it is asserted that these cups, or

culated somewhat rapidly, told that the last and merriest meal of the day had commenced.

Three several groups had assembled round the three fires, and each had its peculiar character. At that which burned in the middle of the scene appeared Pharold, leaning upon the ground, with his elbow supported by a projection of the bank, with a middle-aged woman on one side, and the beautiful girl we have before mentioned on the other. Two or three stout men, of from forty to fifty years, surrounded him; and though joining boldly and freely in all that passed, it was evident that they listened to him when he spoke with the respect due to experience and command, and without any of that sullenness which we have noticed in some of the younger members of the tribe who were with him in the forest. Some more women completed that group; and, though merry enough, it was evident, by their demeanour, that there sat the elders of the tribe. The next fire, at the door of a tent farther up the pit, was surrounded by a different assem-

ornaments, or other articles formed of gold or silver, descend from generation to generation, and are never parted with except under circumstances of the greatest necessity.

blage, though it was in some degree mixed. At the entrance of the little hut itself appeared the beldame whom we have seen acting as cook in the forest, and who on that occasion had shown some inclination towards a resistance of Pharold's authority. Round about her were five or six sturdy young men, from five and twenty to thirty, and five or six women; two of whom did not appear to be more than eighteen or nineteen years of age, while the rest were fine buxom brown dames of thirty-five or six. The worthy lady of the hut, however, seemed now to have lost her acerbity; and in a gay and jovial mood, with many a quip and many a jest, kept all her younger auditors in a roar; though every now and then, with a curl of the lip, and a winking eye, she glanced towards the party at the other fire, as if their graver conversation was the subject of her merry sarcasm.

At the third fire appeared the younger part of the tribe, the boys and girls of all ages, except those, indeed, who rested sleeping in the huts; and this circle, — the loud laughter and broad jokes of which were sometimes checkered by the sounds of contention and affray, occasioned by an old pack of cards, — was pre-

sided by a strong handsome youth of about nineteen or twenty, whose proper place would have been, apparently, at the second fire. He was here, however, placed much nearer to the first group; and this proximity gave him, every now and then, an opportunity—in the intervals of teasing his younger comrades—of looking over his shoulder at the beautiful girl we have called Lena, who, as we have said, was leaning beside Pharold, and listening with seeming attention to his discourse.

The whole three fires had assembled round them a much greater number of the gipsy race than had been congregated in the wood where we first saw them; and, in truth, a very formidable party was there gathered together, who might have given not a little difficulty, and offered—should their need have required it—no insignificant resistance, either to gamekeepers, constables, or police officers. Fourteen stout men, in their prime of strength, with nine or ten boys capable of very efficient service, were there met together, as well as a number of women, whose arms were of no insignificant weight, and whose tongues might have been more formidable still.

As it may be necessary, for various reasons,

to afford a sample of the sort of conversation which was taking place amongst the gipsies on that night, we shall begin, on many accounts, with the second fire, round which it appeared that a liquor, which smelt very like rum, had been circulating with no retarded movements.

“Take it easy, take it easy, Dickon, my chick,” said the old dame, of whom we have already spoken, addressing one of the sturdy young vagabonds by whom she was surrounded: “never let’s kick up a row among ourselves, do you see. That’s the right way to bring the beaks upon us. He’s a king of a fellow, too, that Pharold, though he do sometimes look at one, when he’s angry, as if the words were too big for his throat—just as I’ve seen a fat cock turkey, when I’ve been nimming him off the perch, and got him tight round the neck with both my hands to stop his gabbling.” The simile seemed to tickle the fancy of her auditors, who interrupted her by a roar, which soon, however, died away, and she proceeded. “He’s a king of a fellow though, and it wouldn’t do to make a split—besides, he knows more than common; and the law’s again it, too: so take it easy, Dickon, and I’ll put you up to a thing or two.”

“ Ay, do, mother, there’s a good soul!” replied the young man. “ Do you see, I don’t want to split with Pharold; but damn me if I go out shooting at rabbits, and hares, and little devils like that, if I am to give my word that I won’t touch a deer if it comes across me.”

“ No, no, Dickie, never you meddle with nobody’s deer,” said the old woman; “ though Bill there, at the other fire,” she added, dropping her voice a little, and grinning significantly,—“ though Bill there, at the other fire, seems to have a great fancy for Pharold’s own deer.” A low laugh, whose suppressed tone argued that every one felt themselves on dangerous ground, followed her jest, and she went on. “ But howsomdever, Dick, never you meddle with nobody’s deer, when you are bid not—till the person that bade you is out of the way—do you see? eh, Dicky, my boy?”

“ Ay, that’s something like now, Mother Gray,” replied Dickon. “ Do you see, tomorrow, it seems, we must troop, half one way, and half t’other; and then, if I be not sent to a distance, and can get some good fellows to help me, I’ll bet a bob that I bring home two or three as fat bucks as ever laid their

haunches on the King's table — and that's a better night's work than ever Pharold will do."

"Well, well, Dickon, you shall do it," replied the old dame: "you wait quiet till to-morrow, and seem to think no more about it; and I will get Lena to wheedle Pharold out of the way — if some of his own strange jobs do not take him without; and you shall have free scope and fair play for a night, my boy, any how — so the keepers may count their deer the next morning if they can."

"But suppose I am sent away," said the young man; "I would rather have gone to-night by half."

"But you know you can't, Dickon," she replied; "and it would only make a row to speak about it. We only go ten miles, any of us; and I will take care of your ten miles, my chick. So keep snug; and, do you see, there's no use of bringing up the deer to where we pitch. The shiners are what we want; and Harry Saxon, who bags the pheasants and hares, and who first gave me an inkling about the venison, will take the beasts of us for so much a head, and send them up to the Lord Mayor in London. So to-morrow I will be off early, and get the

job arranged proper, and have a cart and horse ready, do you see, Dickon."

Dickon rubbed his hands with much glee; and as it would seem that some people are born to deer-stealing, he felt that satisfaction which all men must feel when a prospect opens before them of their talents at length having a free course. At that moment, however, two shots were heard at no very great distance, but in the direction of the little wooded promontory, near Morley House, and the sound called forth some symptoms of emotion in more than one of the party. Pharold listened, drew in his eyes, and knit his brows hard, while Dickon vowed with an oath, "That fellow Hallet has gone down into Mrs. Falkland's preserves, and will blow us all with his cursed gun. He might have waited an hour or two."

Pharold listened still, but made no comment; and those by whom he was surrounded seemed to suspend their own observations on the sound till his were spoken. In the mean time Dickon and the good dame, whom he termed Mother Gray, proceeded with the edifying arrangements they had been making, and had nearly completed their plan for getting Pharold out of the way, stealing two or three deer from some

of the neighbouring grounds, and sending them up to the capital to supply his Majesty's burgher lieges in their necessity for fat venison. The exact park which they were to plunder, and some other of the minor considerations, were undergoing discussion, in which the whole party round the fire took a friendly and zealous share, when one of Dickon's comrades, who had been keeping an eye on Pharold's circle, touched him on the shoulder, saying, "They are going to divide the money."

"They will not have so much to divide as we shall get to-morrow," said Dickon; "I will answer for that."

"I don't know, I don't know, my chick," rejoined the worthy beldame; "that Pharold is a knowing hand, and always gets more than any one else, work for it how they will. How he gets it, I am sure I don't know, and I often think he must coin his skin into guineas, for my part."

Now the complexion of the old dame herself, and of every one round her, was as yellow as any one could desire; but that did not prevent them all from enjoying the joke highly, simply, perhaps, because Pharold's countenance might be a little brighter in hue than their own. Several of them, however, now rose and ap-

proached the other fire, at which the proposed division of gains was about to take place; for it seemed that the tribe in question had retained many of the original habits of their people which have been lost amongst other hordes.* One after another, till the turn came to Pharold, the several gipsies poured forth their acquisitions into this general fund: silver and copper were the principal metals that appeared in the collection, though a few pieces of gold, consisting in general of coins of the value of seven shillings or half a guinea, sparkled between: the numbers who contributed, however, and the copious contributions of small coin that some of them poured forth, gave the whole sum an imposing amount; but when Pharold at length received the hat in which it was collected, and drawing forth an old purse added between thirty and forty golden pieces to the store, a murmur of joy and satisfaction ran through the assembled gipsies.

The partition next began; but it was not, as may be supposed, perfectly equal. It was per-

* This habit is said still to exist amongst many of the gipsy tribes; and some persons have not scrupled to assert, though apparently without reason, that they carry their ideas of the community of property to a somewhat licentious extent.

fectly just, however : each received according to the burdens upon him. The married man obtained a share double in amount that bestowed upon the single man : the mother of a large family, even if her husband was no more, claimed in proportion to the number of her offspring, and each orphan—of which be it remarked, by one cause or another, there were several—was treated as a single man. The partition was made by Pharold himself with rigorous equity ; and though almost all the gipsies had gathered round, and observed his proceedings with gleaming black eyes and eager faces, none offered a word either of remonstrance or of information, for all were not only convinced of his justice, but every one would have felt shame to grumble at the award of one, who, contributing more than the whole together, only claimed the share of an individual.

When he had done, and the whole was distributed, Pharold addressed a few words to his companions, such as the division which had just taken place suggested. He told them that in this custom, as in all the others which they themselves observed, they followed exactly the manners of their fathers ; and he praised, not without eloquence, the sort of patriarchal state

in which they lived. He lamented grievously, however, that many of their nation were abandoning their ancient habits; that some had even established themselves in fixed dwelling-places, had submitted themselves to the laws, and had adopted the manners, of the people amongst whom they dwelt. He besought those who surrounded him to live as all their race had lived, and promised that thus they would continue to be as prosperous as the division of that night showed them to be at present.

“ A curse upon our children,” cried one middle-aged woman, “ if they quit the ways of their fathers, and go to live among the puny, white-faced things of the lands: — a curse upon them all: may their line of life be crooked and broken off in the middle, full of crosses, and ending in *Gehennel!*”

A murmur of approbation followed this denunciation; and the rest of the gipsies retiring to their several fires their carousings were renewed, while Pharold related to those who more particularly surrounded him a variety of melancholy facts relative to the degeneracy of various gipsy tribes, who had fallen into the iniquity of fixed dwelling-places, and many other abominations. He spoke of much that

he had seen in his own wanderings, and much that he had heard from others; and his story became so interesting that a good many of the younger of the race crept round to listen. This, however, did not seem to suit his purpose; for he speedily broke off his discourse; and, looking round him, exclaimed in a voice loud enough to be heard at each of the neighbouring fires, "Come, my men, we are sad to-night, and that must not be. Will," he added, speaking to the young man who, as we have said, presided over the younger circle,—“Will, you are a songster, let us hear your voice.”

William obeyed without hesitation; and while he went on with his song, the old dame at the other fire continued conversing eagerly with her favourite Dickon, in tones which were low in themselves, and which were the better cut off from other ears by the rich, fine voice of the singer.

SONG.

In the grey of the dawn, when the moon has gone down,
 Ere the sun has got up, over country and town,
 'T is the time for the lover to steal to his dear,
 In the heart-beating May of the incoming year.

Chorus. — In the grey of the dawn, &c.

In the grey of the dawn, when the fox is asleep,
 And the foxes of cities in slumber are deep,
 'T is the time for the wise from his tent to walk out,
 And to see what the rest of the world is about.

In the grey of the dawn, &c.

In the grey of the dawn, ere the milkmaid trips by,
 To bring home the milk from the bright-coated kye,
 Some earlier hand may have taken the pain,
 To render her milking all labour in vain.

In the grey of the dawn, &c.

In the grey of the dawn, if you 'll meet me down by,
 My own pretty maid with the dark gleaming eye,
 We'll wander away far o'er mountain and plain,
 And leave the old fools to look for us in vain.

In the grey of the dawn, &c.

In the grey of the dawn, if you 'll not come to me,
 My own pretty maid, by the green hawthorn tree,
 You may stumble by chance o'er the corpse of your love,
 As you trip with some other along the dim grove.

In the grey of the dawn, &c.

“ You have changed the song, Will,” said Pharold, as the other ended ; “ you have added and taken away.”

The young man reddened, but merely replied that he had forgot some verses, and been obliged to put new ones ; and Pharold, taking no further notice, continued his conversation with his companions. In the mean time, the consultation between the old lady and Dickon

had gone on throughout the song, and was still continued.

“ Well, well, Dickon, my boy,” rejoined the old lady to something that her companion had said under cover of the singing, “ keep a good tongue in your head for a while, and we ’ll see what we can make of it. It is a shame, indeed, that he should have his own way of getting so much stuff, no one knows how—from the *Spirit*, I think—and prevent you from following your way of getting some too, specially when it ’s all to go with the rest. And he ’s proud of his way of getting money, too. Did you see with what an air he poured the shiners in ?”

“ That I did, that I did,” replied the other ; “ curse him ! I ’d get as many as he, if he ’d let me.”

“ Ay, but you see the thing is, Dick,” she answered, “ he gets it, no one knows how, without ever saying a word about it to any one. Now, you follow the same plan, my chick ; and if he asks you, you can then tell him to mind his own business. But, hush, he ’s looking at us. Bid Bill give us another stave.”

“ Bill,” cried Dickon, “ give us another touch of it, there ’s a good ’un. Sing us Old Dobbin, and then come here and take a swig of the bingo with me and Mother Gray.”

Bill was not at all reluctant; and without the slightest appearance of bashful hesitation again began to pour forth his fine voice in song. The air, however, was of a very different kind, as far as expression went, from that which he had formerly chosen, which had been somewhat more sentimental and solemn than the words in general required, or than might have been expected from the personage by whom it was sung. In the present case, his tones were all lively, and the song seemed well known to all his companions.

SONG.

1.

Lift your head, Robin!
 Lift it and see,
 Why shakes his bells, Dobbin,
 Under the tree.
 Why shakes his bells, Dobbin,
 His old noddle bobbing,
 As if there were strangers upon the green lea?

2.

Lie quiet, lie quiet,
 Though danger be near,
 If we make not a riot
 There's nothing to fear.
 If you will but try it,
 And only lie quiet,
 There is no harm will happen my own little dear.

3.

I have heard of the fairy
 That walks in the night,
 With a figure so airy
 And fingers so light,
 That though watch dogs hairy,
 May sleep in the airy,
 She will empty your hen coops before morning light.

4.

I have heard of the witches
 That ride in the dark,
 And despite hedge and ditches
 Get into the park ;
 Nim hares from their niches,
 Without any hitches,
 And think man-traps and spring-guns a toothless dog's bark.

5.

Then lift your head, Robin,
 Lift it to find
 Why the bells of old Dobbin
 Sound on the night wind ;
 Then lift your head, Robin,
 For my heart is throbbing,
 About witches and fairies and things of the kind.

6.

Lie still, 't is no fairy
 That trips the green sod ;
 To hen coop or dairy
 No witch takes her road.
 No, no ! 't is no fairy,
 Nor any thing airy ;
 Lie still and be silent, the *beaks* are abroad !

This very edifying composition seemed to give infinitely greater satisfaction to the generality of the gipsies than the former song had done ; and especially in those places where the singer contrived to modulate his voice, so as to change the tone from the male to the female, or from the female to the male, as the words required, the approbation of his hearers was loud and vehement. Pharold alone appeared somewhat gloomy upon the occasion ; and were one to look into his breast, which we do not intend to do very deeply on this occasion, one might see a strange and bitter contest between early feelings, habits, and inclinations, and refinements and tastes acquired from the most opposite sources—a state of things so discordant in all their elements, that nothing but an originally wild and eccentric nature could have endured its existence in the same bosom. Some one has said, “ *Malheureux celui qui est en avant de son siècle ;*” and it certainly might be said, in every class of society, “ *Malheureux celui qui est au-dessus de son état.*” Pharold then became gloomy, and felt disgusted at things which amused and interested his companions ; nor, perhaps, was his gloom decreased by seeing that the beautiful young companion

who leaned beside him was as much pleased and amused as the rest.

“ I thought that I had taught you to despise such things, Lena,” he said in a low tone, and with somewhat of a frowning brow.

“ Yes, yes,” she replied, colouring brightly ; “ and so I do, when I think—but yet——”

She was interrupted by the man named Dickon, who gave a low whistle, and exclaimed at the same time, repeating a part of his companion’s song,—

Lift your head, Robin,
Lift it and see,
Why shakes his bells, Dobbin,
Under the tree !

And almost at the same moment, one of the horses, of which the gipsies had several feeding upon the common just above, repeated a low neigh which had been heard, in the first instance, by Dickon, as he was called, alone. All was instantly silent; and then the jumping sort of noise which a horse with a clog upon his feet makes, when endeavouring to go fast, was heard from the common; and Pharold’s practised ear could also distinguish, proceeding from the gravel of the road, the sound of a

man's footstep, the near approach of which had probably frightened the horse.

"Jump up, Will," he cried quickly, addressing the singer; "jump up, and see who it is. Stop him up there! If he want me, whistle twice; if you want help, whistle once!"

The young man was up the bank in a moment; but the length of time that elapsed before they heard any farther sound made them at first fancy that they had been mistaken in thinking that any one approached, and then showed them that in the clear silence of the night the sounds had made themselves heard farther than they had at first imagined. All kept a profound silence; but, after the lapse of about a minute, the murmur of distant voices was distinguished, and then came a low long whistle. Every one started on his feet, but the next moment a second whistle was heard, and Pharold said calmly, "It is for me! I may be absent, perhaps, for an hour or so; but as the young man has come to-night instead of to-morrow, we will set off all the earlier in the morning."

He spoke to one of the elder men near him; but in a tone of voice loud enough to be heard by those around. Dickon and Mother Gray gave

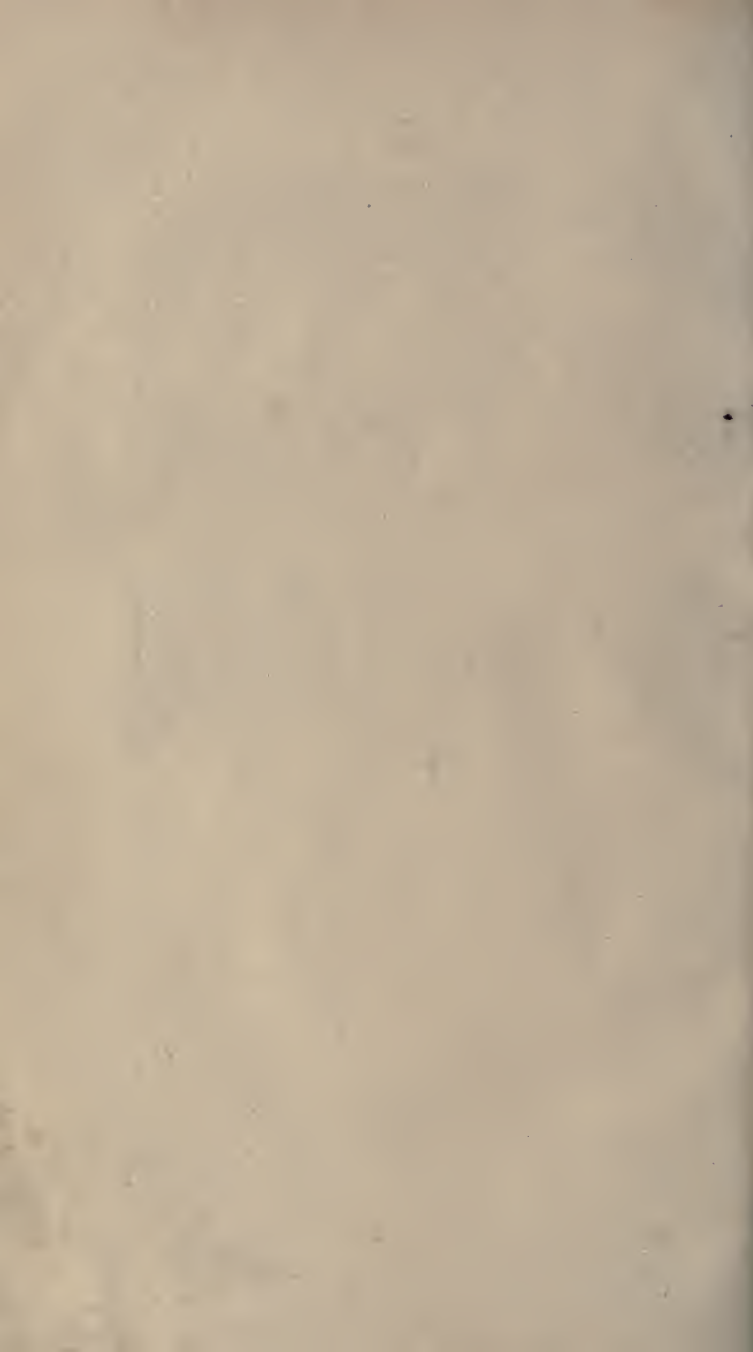
each other a look; and when Pharold slowly took his way up the bank she stuck her tongue into her toothless cheek with very little of that reverence in her looks which she sometimes professed for the leader of the tribe.

Soon after he was gone the young man called Will returned; and was questioned by several of the gipsies regarding the stranger who had intruded upon them at so late an hour. All that he could or would reply was, that he was a young fellow with a sword by his side, and that he had walked away with Pharold; with which tidings they were forced to content themselves, and their revels went on and concluded much as they had begun.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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The gipsy

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